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Travel and Big Game

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TRAVEL AND BIG GAME

MOOSE.—*Chapter vi.*

TRAVEL AND BIG GAME

BY

PERCY SELOUS

WITH TWO CHAPTERS BY

H. A. BRYDEN

WITH SIX ORIGINAL DRAWINGS BY

CHARLES WHYMPER

LONDON
BELLAIRS AND CO.
1897

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I.

BY SEA AND LAND.

An ocean passage now-a-days is humdrum, compared to what it was twenty-five years ago; but even then, it was not every voyage which was marked with such incidents as was that of R.M.S.S., the "Neva," in which vessel I was bound for Buenos Ayres *en route* for the Banda Orientale.

We were at anchor at St. Vincent, Cape Verdes, watching the boys diving for coin, when the fin of a big shark, attracted by the offal thrown overboard by the butcher, was discerned coming in from the open water. A general *sauve-qui-peut* among the swimmers took place and the shark came right up to within a stone's throw of the ship. It having transpired that there was a man on shore who had had some experience in whaling, and had the paraphernalia therefor, a deputation from among the passengers set out to try and induce him to harpoon the fish. At first he would not entertain the idea at any price; but, as the hat sent round became heavier, he wavered, and at last, being no longer able to refuse the tempting

offer, he proceeded to rig out. The shark seemed to have his misgivings as soon as the man (a negro), with his assistant, put out in his cockle-shell, for it made for the open sea again. After some manœuvring, however, he managed to head it off, and before long was successful in planting his harpoon in the fish. Then, if you will, that boat tossed and jumped about, but it did not last long. A shark is not like a whale, and, as we afterwards saw, the blade had sunk deep down into the viscera. Soon the shark was so far exhausted as to enable the boatmen to haul it alongside; a bow-line was speedily made fast around its tail, and the donkey engine had it on deck in short order.

A dreadful incident occurred later on in the voyage, when the ship, through an accident to her machinery, was lying motionless in mid-ocean, whilst the engineers were patching up the cylinder. Many small sharks were cruising about, and some of the passengers were trying to catch them with salt-pork. There were large ones, too, but they did not come so near. I happened to be in the saloon reading, together with some half dozen others, when suddenly a man rushed past, and without giving anyone a chance of doing anything, jumped right through one of the port-holes astern. I was at the side almost

as soon as he touched water, but only just in time to see him dragged down, dismembered as he went. The whole thing was so horrible and so rapid that it took one's breath away. The wretched man proved to be the carpenter of the ship, who had been drinking heavily for some time, and who had gone overboard in a fit of delirium. The ship was soon able to proceed, and though my purpose is to ask my readers to accompany me, figuratively, on a trip to the Uruguay River, there are other incidents I would like to relate, and which I think will not prove uninteresting, before I start up country.

On reaching Rio de Janeiro, a longer stay was made than usual, and I was fortunate enough to participate in a genuine slave hunt. This may sound very dreadful, but I could not have helped the culprit by staying away. A negro had run away from a hacienda in the vicinity, and the owner had sent down for the bloodhounds. These dogs were kept in kennels on an island in the harbour, and very ugly looking customers they were. An English sovereign was sufficient passport, and visiting a caballeriza I hired a horse, leaving at the same time a deposit which, according to my opinion, would have purchased him twice over. A start was soon made, and the bloodhounds laid on—some little difference

between this run and the last I had had some few weeks previously with the Hon. R. C. Hill's (now Lord Hill) hounds! I could see how poor a chance a runaway slave must have, and yet such attempts were often made. Otherwise it would not have been necessary to keep the bloodhounds always in readiness. We followed through the outskirts of the city and up towards Tijuca, but the fugitive had not had much start and was run up to in a large bread-fruit tree, up which he had climbed to escape being torn to pieces. After the bloodhounds had been secured, the trembling wretch was ordered at the muzzle of a pistol to descend, and having done so, received such a thrashing as made my flesh creep; then, tottering and bleeding, he was driven back towards the city like a bullock. I had seen more than I cared to see, so galloped back and restored my steed; then went on board again and was made the subject of a severe discourse by several ladies, on the iniquity of joining in slave hunts. However, I softened them somewhat by stating that my presence had been the means of diminishing the punishment received at the capture; and so it had, for I had paid them to cease.

Monte Video was our next stopping place; and here I first witnessed a bull-fight. But I

was so disappointed and disgusted that I will not inflict more than a few remarks upon my readers. Shades of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage!" I had expected blood, but such an exhibition of butchery I did not anticipate. Poor worn-out, starved horses, used only as buffers to catch the bull's charge, and which he sometimes lifted bodily off the ground, as their riders slipped over the side, disembowelling the victim as he shook it free. At one time several were either dying on the ground, or dragging themselves maimed about the arena. Certainly the *coup-de-grâce* was skilful when it came; but how women can sit and applaud and look on such a scene is astonishing. Next day we found ourselves at our journey's end, so far as the ship was concerned; and at Buenos Ayres, too, strange to say, one of my first introductions was written in blood. In the evening I went to the Alcazar, and had not been long seated, bestowing my share of admiration on a pretty "cantatrice", when she suddenly put her hand up to her face with an exclamation of pain. Some ruffian had hit her on the cheek with a pellet from a catapult and there was an immediate uproar. In less time than it takes to write these lines, he had been stabbed to the heart, but not before he had mortally wounded the

man who had revenged the insult in this summary fashion. The lady had fainted and was carried to the back; the men also were taken away; and in a little while the programme was proceeded with as though nothing at all unusual had happened.

I had originally intended staying some time in Buenos Ayres, but I had enough of this city in a few days. Among other places I visited were the mataderos. Here a number of cattle are driven into an enclosure over which is a scaffolding on which men walk and pith each individual beast behind the horns with a long knife; this goes on until they are all down, then the work of skinning commences. I will pass over the journey up to Rosario on a river steamer; also my temporary stay in the city. Afterwards I whiled away some time by calling at one estancia or an other, and got considerable insight into the ways of the rancheros—lassooing and branding cattle, and horses, etc. I came out ostensibly to learn sheep-farming at the estancia Santa Kilda, Banda Orientale, but I never reached this place. I was too near the virgin forest to resist the temptation, and to this day the kind of life I started on then for the first time, has held the ascendancy.

To jump over considerable detail, I at last

found myself at Salto. I had a saddle and appurtenances, made for me by Davis of the Strand, and which cost £14 14*s*. More than once I had been told that I ran a good chance of losing my life for that saddle. This did not bother me much, but I really did not want it and turned it into various things that would be necessary for me to carry on a trip that I had made up my mind to take up the Uruguay river. I fitted out a small roomy boat, such a one as I could handle, and with my double barrelled gun and converted Enfield carbine, and such sundries as no naturalist would go without on such an expedition, I bade good-bye to Salto, and with half a dozen dogs for companions started up stream. My boat had an adjustable canopy, and I had also a hammock among my belongings. I had no intention of going very far this time—but merely meant feeling my way. I rowed steadily on for the first day, merely halting for rest and refreshment, my object being to get away before beginning to hunt. I certainly shot a small deer, more for the dogs than anything else, though I cut a portion of the best part, and salted it down in a little keg I had for the purpose. In the evening I hauled my craft into a convenient backwater, and slung my hammock up between two trees. After supper

I turned in, but it was easier to think about sleep than to find it. What with mosquitoes and ants I thought I should have been devoured. I tried all sorts of "absolutely sure" nostrums and found them equally useless. Finally, I made myself a helmet out of withes, something after the fashion of a fencing mask, covering it with some of the gauze I had for a butterfly net, and this I found better than anything else—especially for sleeping in. I was only once bitten by a vampire, and this on the second night of my journey before I had made my mask. This night I found it was as difficult to keep awake as I had found it to woo slumber the preceding one. I have little doubt that what travellers say respecting these bats fanning you to sleep with their wings, is true. I only know that a something indescribable lulled me off, and that I awoke in a manner equally uncanny—with a kind of numbness and chill about one hand which, as I threw it up, came in contact with the vampire. I did not feel any ill effects from it, only an intolerable itching for a time. It was during the ensuing day that I made my patent headdress, and I also afterwards wore a thick pair of gloves at night time. It goes without saying that I always kept my boots on; I should not wonder but that I shall die with them on, some day.

SHOOTING OCELOT.—*Chapter i.*

The next day I saw deer, and innumerable water-fowl, parrots, etc.; besides monkeys, and Coypu rats in any quantity. I also saw a small herd of peccaries, but had no notion of interfering with them; my dogs, however, were sorely in want of a tussle. I know very well how it would have fared with them had I let them go. I knew that I should lose them, either by alligators, or some way before I got through, and that is why I took so many.

One night I was lying awake, watching the fireflies, and hoping I might soon meet with some of the larger cats. All of a sudden I heard an unearthly wail close by me—a most blood-curdling noise. Before long it was repeated, and I located it then. I could see at once that it was an ocelot as it lay alongside the limb of a tree, its head leaning over, showing the white patches on the back of the ears. The moon was full and high, and it was as light as day; so gently reaching my carbine which lay by my side in the hammock, and without rising, I sent a ball into the cat, and toppled her over. Out I scrambled, and caught up my gun, which was leaning against the tree at my head, as the dogs came splashing out of the boat in which they always remained at night. The ocelot was, however, up the tree again like a streak: all

the same I gave it another bullet, and toppled it over once more, right into the mouths of the dogs. It was a beautiful creature, and the first of the wild felidæ I had bagged. For this reason its skin ornaments my wall still. After hanging the creature up to the foot-rope I had to get the dogs back into the boat, and push her out again. Next morning, as soon as I had breakfasted, I skinned the cat and threw the carcase into the stream, but it did not go very far before a great pair of jaws closed on it, and took it down. I shot a fine otter during the day; there were plenty about, but difficult to obtain, also Coypu rats innumerable; but I will confine myself to relating one or two of the more exciting adventures I had with larger and more dangerous game.

One day as I was paddling leisurely along, facing upstream, as I usually do when the current is not too strong, I came to where the beach was shelving and rocky, and there, among the stones near the water, two young jaguar cubs were playing, rolling over each other like kittens. I had only seen one jaguar before, and strangely enough, this was a black one; I could not, unfortunately, get a shot, to my great mortification. The cubs did not seem to heed my presence till I got quite near them, when I fired,

and bowled one of them over. They commenced a tremendous squalling, and I began to think of a livelier time likelier to ensue, when the old ones appeared on the scene, as they assuredly would. I thought I was pretty secure in my boat, and was about to shoot the other cub; for much as I should have liked to secure it alive, I did not see the advisability; neither could I have possibly kept it and transported it. I had just made up my mind to shoot the other, when the bushes opened beyond, and out stepped one of the old ones, carrying a peccary, as a cat would a mouse. She made right for the dead cub, which its companion was trying to get to move. She seemed to take in the whole situation at a glance, and I could see my best plan was to fire there and then. Just as she started up with a terrific roar I gave her a shot in the chest, and down she dropped, but was quickly up again. What would I not have given for my Winchester repeater of to-day, if I had known there had been any such weapon in prospective? But my carbine had to be capped every time a cartridge was inserted, and this capping was an awful drawback. An answering roar as she fell, told me that her mate was at hand. I suppose they had not heard the screams of their cubs on account of the rapid water

ahead. The female fell again, and I turned my whole attention to the now infuriated male, which, after a few sympathetic motions around his stricken spouse and his offspring, came right into the water after me. I had got a cap on and fired, which only seemed to enrage him the more. I then seized my gun, loaded one barrel with No. 6, the other with No. 4, and waited till he was pretty close, at the same time putting a cartridge in my carbine, but I could not cap it, for he was getting too near. I then gave him both charges, but they did not stop him, and he got his forepaws on to the gunwale of the boat, and nearly capsized her. At the same moment one of my dogs went clear into his jaws, and was scrunched flat, whilst another jumped over and swam ashore. I seized the axe and pounded the jaguar's head, but it seemed as hard as a rock; I then hacked at the paws, and he let go and fell into the water. I now capped with all speed, and getting a good chance at his head put a bullet through it, and he turned over. As quickly as I could reload, I pulled up the anchor and followed him, for I had no wish to see him taken down by an alligator. I got him in tow, and into shore safely, and for the first time could admire his magnificent skin. I then lifted him into the

boat, which I could not do out in the stream, for he was a great weight and would probably have capsized me. When I got back to the spot I found the other old jaguar dead, but the remaining cub took to the forest and I lost him, as also the dog, which swam ashore, and I had only four left. I lost no time in skinning and making the hides of my game safe; the sooner the better in such latitudes.

A few days after I shot a python as it hung down near the water; I got a bullet through its head, and after considerable difficulty managed to secure a rope to its neck, and sling it up to a bough again, for it would be hours before I could get the skin packed away, and I did not want to mutilate it; it measured just six of my paces, about twenty feet, and its writhings were incessant and over-powering; it was dusk before it hung still.

Next morning I was trying to get some fresh meat when my dogs gave tongue and became very excited. Following them with difficulty, I came to the foot of a tree up which I soon espied a puma. He was at full length along a large limb, and it was difficult to get a sight at a vulnerable point. Like a squirrel he managed to keep the branch between himself and me whichever way I turned, but at last I had a

try. He only roared at the shot, and did not show any signs of moving. After a bit I took another shot, and this time he turned right over, hung by his forepaws for a moment, and then came down among the dogs. They scattered in every direction, but not before one of them had been badly torn. The puma then made for me, but his back was broken and it was an easy matter to finish him. He was of much lighter colour than those I have met with in North America, and not so red. On going up the river again I had the misfortune to snag my boat, and came near going to the bottom, bag and baggage. The water rushed in, in spite of all I could do, but with the strength of despair I managed to get her aground, and in time had all fixed up again. Fortunately I had brought some pitch with me. The whole business nevertheless caused a tedious delay, for all my belongings were wetted and damaged. Whilst waiting I tried roast monkey, and found it not at all bad. I wounded a tapir but he got into the river and disappeared, and although I saw several subsequently I was not able to secure one. I got, however, two more pumas and a jaguar before I started on my return journey, besides numerous natural history specimens.

II.

HUNTING AND TRAPPING IN CANADA.

I HAD intended returning to Buenos Ayres, and making another more lengthened trip up the Uruguay River; but circumstances altered my plans, and instead of South America, I found myself a few months later in Toronto. Whiling away the summer as best as I could, for there is nothing in the way of hunting and trapping to do there, when "fall" came I made tracks for the country up North.

In due course, we fixed our camp on the banks of the Manganetawan River, about half way between Lake Nipissing and Georgian Bay. With me were a French Canadian, named Gerard, and a chum I had been acquainted with some time, Fawcett by name. It did not take us long to build our log cabin, and by the end of the second day we had everything fixed up, roof on, stove in place, and were busy getting straight with the hundred and one little things that go to make a winter in the woods both profitable and enjoyable. Traps had to be overhauled, snow-shoes looked over, etc.; we were then ready and hoping for a speedy freezing

up, and for snow. Game was plentiful—fish, fur, and feather—everything showed for a profitable hunt when the furs got prime. With such a profusion of flesh provisions around, it would hardly appear necessary to provide against the proverbial "rainy day," but all the same we caught fish, and smoked them, as well as laid by a stock of jerked deer meat. Twenty years ago, parts were not cleared up and settled as they are now, and we were not likely to come in contact much with the outer world for several months. We each had a hound with us. Every hunter has a hound; ostensibly an English fox-hound, and very fair samples too, although they might not pass quite "straight" with Goodall or Tom Firs. Mine was a southerner, partaking much of the bloodhound, and a famous "cooner;" all were good on any game. Then, it was not against the law to use dogs in the deer country, or lanterns. When we got up, the deer were still running hard, and the bucks uneatable, but a nice doe was shot and jerked. We had abundance of partridge (ruffed grouse), spruce partridge, and fish, also lots of duck. Bear were numerous, but their hides were poor as yet. We could not have trapped them, for as long as there is plenty of beechmast and fallen food, they will not look at a bait. It was not

because the grapes were sour that we did not interfere with them;—our trip was for making as much money as we could, and we did not intend to take back a lot of inferior furs. It would astonish some of my readers to know what trapping really means out there. I could give the names of many well-to-do people of my acquaintance, whose houses and farms have been paid for entirely from the proceeds of their furs. But buyers will have little to do with second-rate furs, and trash, as they term it, they won't look at.

I will jump over the Indian summer, and come to the time when we could start, and lay our line of traps, and when all other game would be in full season. But as I have to do with larger game, I will leave the beaver, otter, mink, coon, muskrat, fischer, and martens, pale and dark, with the remark that, though they are small, their proceeds constitute by far the most profitable part of an outing. Now and again we trap a bear or deer, a cat or a lynx. Deer are taken in a wooden trap—a frame about two feet by eighteen inches, resting round a hole dug in the line of a deer's runaway. In this frame are fitted lengthwise four or five pieces of wood, about four inches square, which, when set, are so placed that the edges come nearly in contact,

and not the sides. This is carefully covered with dry herbage (the whole being so placed that the animal has to jump over a fallen log), and when the deer puts his forefeet in, the slabs revolve sufficiently to let the legs well down. In attempting to rise, the lengths shut again on the deer's shins, and snap them like matchwood, and if the trap is properly set there is small danger of escape. It matters not if the whole concern is dragged out, for the moveable pieces are studded with short nails which clutch the firmer the more the creature pulls Bears are often taken in this way, and the whole thing can be made and set with an axe and augur, and a few spike nails, out of the timber around. Wolverines were not uncommon, and caused us much trouble by robbing our traps of both bait and fur, but do what we could we only succeeded in taking one of them. We got many wild cats —bay lynx—for it is certainly a lynx, so far as the tufted ears go, which so distinguish the family. It, however, walks like an ordinary cat, whilst the Canadian lynx invariably progresses by bounds. Of course all these animals are ferocious, and it is hard to say which is the most savage when any one of them really gets cornered up. Fawcett and I got a cat into a hollow log one day, and as he would not come out, we chopped him

out, and the thing fought to beat all. For fear of shooting each other, or our dogs, we could not fire, whilst the cat divided his attention between the four of us, in a most exemplary manner, clawing us up right well. At last I got a whack at his head with my hatchet that laid him out, and poor Fawcett, who seemed to get most of the fun, was a sight to see. This cat weighed thirty-eight pounds. Fancy a Scotch wild cat weighing that and being spiteful in proportion! We caught several afterwards in deadfalls. Then deer were so plentiful; one could shoot one at any time. Now things are different, for although deer are plentiful enough they are better educated.

Perhaps a few remarks on the way we take deer now may not be uninteresting. First, there is "still hunting", which is carefully beating likely-looking ground, and "jumping" the deer. This requires great skill, for the leaves are dry, and crackle at every movement, and unless you have acquired the step of the Indian, who will walk anywhere without a sound, you will be fortunate if you catch sight of the deer's flag, and he is out of sight before you can pull the trigger. When the snow is on the ground everything is easier. You can proceed noiselessly, and have the track to follow. But even then you want

all your wits about you. Deer always lie down in their tracks with their heads looking back the way they have come. As long as the tracks show that the deer has gone on steadily, it is straightforward work. I have not forgotten the advice an old Indian gave me: "Step once; look twice." I never wish for better. When you find the deer slows down, and begins to deviate right or left, it is useless to follow straight any further. You must make a wide cast, governed of course by circumstances, the wind or the lay of the ground; and no amount of description by me would help much for experience alone will tell; but the main object is to get beyond your deer, and work up exactly in the opposite direction to which he is looking. When he does jump you have to shoot quickly just the same. Another, and by far the least fatiguing way, is to station yourself on some good "runaway." Deer are continually on the move, and always follow these runaways, extending as they do for scores of miles. You may not get a shot the first day; the next you may kill three or four deer. It is only a question of time, and patience. But one thing always bear in mind; never leave your station if you are alone, until it is too dark to see; or, if you have companions, until you get your signal.

But it is of twenty years ago I ought to be writing, when all was different; dogs were allowed in the deer country, and skinning could be practised when one liked. The killing of deer then had not been reduced to the fine art which it is to-day, at all events in the more settled districts. I was standing at the door of the cabin one morning, running my eye down the barrel of my rifle towards a bald-headed eagle, which was screeching from the summit of a dead pine. Whilst I was meditating whether or not to fire at him five deer trotted leisurely into view, and stood about fifty yards, or ten rods from me, gazing with perfect unconcern on .the scene. To drop my weapon from the bird on to the nearest buck was the work of an instant, and the next my bullet had crashed through him, and through another immediately beyond him, too. The first one fell with a broken back, whilst the other hopped off for about twenty rods, and then dropped dead too. Gerard arrived before I had finished hanging them up, and was not a little surprised to see such a show, the more especially as he had been away only about an hour seeing to a bear trap down the river. He had, however, heard my shot and guessed we should have partridge for supper again. He said he had sighted a herd

of elk going south. Asking him what a herd meant, he said four animals, but one carried splendid horns. I should have been glad of the head, but, as we had plenty of venison and were obliged to see carefully to our traps on account of the plagued wolverines, we did not follow them up. Probably if we had, we should not have met with them until they had pulled up at Georgian Bay. That night a little snow fell, and this was what we had been hoping for, and meant business. Black bear were very numerous, and their tracks and the places where they had grubbed for beechnuts were everywhere; but we rarely saw them, for few animals are more wary than these. There are times, when, during feeding, they can be approached quite closely, but these are rare. As a rule, on the least alarm they are off for the cedar swamps, and once there they are practically safe. Or if the country is free from such fastnesses, they will, especially if they know you are after them, go for ten or twelve miles without holding up. A bear in the woods will always run along a log, and as these are innumerable, it is pretty rough work following one up. Now and then a dog who knows its business will tree them, and then he is at your mercy.

About two weeks after my double deer shot, I had been chasing a bear for perhaps a couple of miles, though he was not aware of it, or he would not have stopped and fed so many times on the way. With the assistance of the hound, I succeeded in heading him off from the swamp; he meant making into a belt of hardwood, and the dog running into him had him treed before he could quite realise his position. It was a big sugar maple he went up, and it took half a dozen bullets before the one that found his brain tumbled him down at my feet. This bear was four hundred pounds, I should say, though we could not actually weigh so large an animal. There were lots of foxes, grey and red, and alas! they had to be shot or trapped. But then the red fox of England and that of America are totally distinct. You have only to examine the thickness of the skin to see that. Again, the foxes here have no stamina, and run round and round in a circle exactly as a hare does before hounds, at home. Then foxes' hides are worth six or seven shillings apiece, and on this particular trip we took twenty-five. The winter had now really set in, and the ground was all frozen up. A wolverine had been very troublesome of late, but on going my rounds one morning I found he had been just a bit too

clever, and had got his back broken by the pole of a big dead-fall. Wolverines are very cunning, and this was the only one we managed to get. He had been in the habit of breaking in at the back of the house we built round our traps, the apertures of course left for such animals as martens, etc., being too small for him. Then the bait would be abstracted, and if fur were within, this would very often be ruined. Consequently his capture was appreciated. The trap had been set for a bear or a lynx if he should come that way; so I burned some bee's-wax, and after resetting the trap, replaced the deer's viscera which had been untouched. There was another, a steel trap, farther on, and still in luck, I saw that it was gone when I came to the place. The bears had now got so that they would look at a bait, which they will not do so long as they can find plenty of beechmast, etc. There was a lot of dwarf hemlock—shin-tangle, we call it—a very appropriate name too—and through this the bear had frequently picked up his clog and carried it, as it was easy to see by the tracks. It was only a question of time coming up with him, for the trap was a good one, and I knew it would stick to him. I soon saw him and he turned and showed fight at once, but to little purpose, for with my second

shot he stretched out for good. He was only about half the size of the last one I had killed out of the tree. I now hurried back for assistance, and finding Fawcett in camp, we took the sleigh and fetched back our game before the wolves should have a chance to tear it up.

Next day I went down and speared some bass through a hole in the ice, and they proved very acceptable after our rather monotonous meat diet. Two Sioux Indians also came along to the cabin and begged. They were in pretty hard shape, but both had guns, so could not well starve. But they said they had no powder, and that they had been following some elk and had got thrown out by the snow. This I believe was a lie. We seized them as horse-thieves and fugitives. Nevertheless, I gave them some powder, much to Gerard's disgust, for he would have liked to have scalped the pair of them, had he dared. But I was not then so tough as I may have since become, and after they had had a good square meal and smoked a pipe, they became communicative, especially in the way of begging anything. I had a little musical box which I set going and kept in my pocket. The faces of the pair were a sight, but they went away in the end without clearing up the mystery of the "medicine."

It seemed to me that they must have had some harbour not a great way off, for no human being could have camped out with the temperature where it was. A few days after it blew a blizzard, and do what we would, we had our cabin full of snow. No matter how we packed and stopped, it found its way in; but, fortunately, we had laid in a stock of wood, and could at any rate keep up a certain degree of warmth. Outside the temperature was, by my little glass, 32 degrees below zero. All day and all night, and most of the next day it kept on, and there was nothing for it but to lay by, and play pedro, and spin yarns to be sociable, though I got a book out when I had the opportunity. Then I had my diary to keep, and certain specimens to see to, such matters having no interest to my companions. When the wind let up, and we could investigate, we found plenty of snow, though not so much as we had anticipated. Still we had to mount snowshoes, which had not been required before. As our traps were all marked by blazes, we had no difficulty in finding them. By the way, for the enlightenment of those who do not believe in such intellegence in animals, let me tell them that many creatures will follow the trapper's blaze all through, and that a marten, for

instance, will often trust to his sight rather than to his nose, and if a tree is blazed near, he will not rest until he has found the bait, and in all probability trapped himself into the bargain.

III.

DESERT HUNTING.

The rainy season was over, and the Molopo river was swollen to overflowing, as were its tributaries, up one of which—the Nasop—my waggon was some twenty miles or so. These rains take it out of a hunter in a country not over healthy at the best of times; but in spite of sundry forebodings, I stayed the wet season out, circumstances and exchequer not favouring a back move and a return. With plenty of quinine I pulled through fairly well, but was not the least bit less thankful for the return of more settled weather.

One day I was out seeing what I could do towards replenishing my larder, when I came across a solitary blue bull wildebeest. He was standing out on the veldt, and, as I was quite hidden—for I had come up the belt of brush bordering the river—he had not noticed my approach. Though he looked plump enough, I would just as soon there had been cows along as well, for odd bulls of any game are always rank and tough. Still, he had a fine grizzled head, and I let fly at him. Down he dropped, with

his near fore leg smashed; but this did not prevent him from getting up and making off at a good pace. His dangling leg, however, bothered him considerably, and after going for half a mile, he lay down, as I expected he would do if I did not press him. He did not appear to have made out whence the shot came, for though he looked in every direction after he lay down, he was not satisfied. It was some distance back to the waggon, but I decided to return for my horse, and when I had ridden to within viewing distance, I saw that my prey still lay where he had dropped, or nearly so. He regarded me attentively, but did not rise until I got pretty nearly up to him, when he rose very stiffly. I then gave him another shot, which, owing to my horse's uneasiness, missed him, and the wounded animal, realising what was up, set his head down and came at us like a miniature buffalo, at as good a pace as he could with his shattered leg. Wildebeest are remarkably savage, and their curious set of horns and shaggy front make them look specially ferocious. My horse did not like his appearance at all, and I had quite a job to load and manage him. At last, however, I got another cartridge in and ended the poor creature's misery, for the splintered shank bone was sticking right out through the flesh.

A Miniature Buffalo.—*Chapter iii.*

Whilst riding back with him slung across my saddle-pommel, I shot at and wounded a leopard which was skulking among the thorn bushes. But although I dismounted and followed the bloody spoor for some distance, I eventually lost all trace of him. Next day I continued the hunting, but I never saw anything more of him. Referring to leopards reminds me of an escapade I had with one of these creatures some time previously, further south. As is so frequently the case, I had been much disturbed during the night by prowling animals, which I found out were leopards. I was exasperated by the loss of my best dog, and made up my mind, if possible, to get a fine skin and avenge his death at one and the same time; so making a hurried breakfast, and leaving my two kaffir boys in charge of the skerm, I set out with the only dog I now had left. The spoor, which was plain enough in the sand, led right away towards the river, which on either side is bordered for a quarter of a mile or so with "wait-a-bit" thorns and underbrush. After going a mile or more my dog showed special eagerness, and pulled up at a tree, the bark of which was all scored by the claws of leopards and was evidently used by them continually for stretching their talons. A lot of porcupine quills also lay around show-

ing that the leopard had recently made a meal, of which I was glad, for I thought I should be more likely to find him lazy and lying up, and hence easier to manage. A little further on I came to a kloof or ravine, which I had to descend and ascend.

Before I reached the top, the dog began barking and I hurried on, as well as I could, over the loose stones, for I did not want to lose my only remaining dog. He, however, came yelping back, just as I gained the top of the bank, and at the same time I caught sight of the leopard, which was making across the open for a patch of thorns a couple of hundred yards distant. I was somewhat out of breath from scrambling over the uneven ground, but, taking as careful aim as I could, I fired. I knew I had hit him all right, even if he had not stopped and bitten at the wound, but the shot was too far back as well as too low. At the same instant he caught sight of me, whilst I, not relishing his looks, hastily pushed in another cartridge. I had not my trusty "Winchester" then, or the leopard would not have served me as he did. The weapon I was using was a converted Enfield carbine, which, though a splendid shooter, only took one shell and required capping. *Hinc illæ lacrimæ.* I could

not get the cap on before he was upon me, and over we both went of a heap—I undermost. He got my left arm between his teeth, and I could feel his great fangs crunching, but I seized my long hunting knife, and managed to get it under his chin and give a frantic gash which almost cut his head off. All this did not take so long to happen as it does to relate, but it was pretty lively whilst it lasted, and when I crawled from beneath my now limp antagonist, I must have presented a pretty strange appearance, what with my own blood and that of the leopard which almost smothered me. Fortunately my face had escaped laceration, but my arm was almost powerless. Still, I went down to the river and got rid of some of the obnoxious gore, after which I felt much refreshed; my arm, too, began to lose its numbness. By the way, I had previously had almost a similar encounter with one of these animals, which ended in exactly the same manner, *viz.*, by the use of my knife. I managed to skin my leopard—a splendid hide, though he was not so large as others I have killed. This leopard only lacerated my arm, whereas the one alluded to tore me up atrociously, and I therefore don't consider the encounter now related nearly so dangerous as the first one.

In the meantime my dog had regained his composure; since he had seen two of his comrades flattened out by leopards he had often turned tail, but he was very useful in tracking them. I had rolled the skin up and was just about starting back for camp, when the dog again attracted my attention, acting as though he had picked up a fresh scent; and although I felt pretty sick, still I could not resist the temptation and followed him, first of all hanging up the skin in a thorn bush. The dog held on and I followed as well as I could for perhaps another mile, fortunately along the wooded ground the best part of the time, so that I was shaded to some extent from the burning sunbeams which under ordinary circumstances would have caused me no inconvenience but now almost prostrated me. I doubtless had lost considerably more blood than I imagined, but the sudden renewed barking of the dog put new life into me and I hurried on. The leopard had veered off to some rocky ground, where he had evidently located himself, and, as he would not probably leave his stronghold for any dog, I sat down and rested a while. I also examined the breech of my carbine and arranged things as well as I could, so that no repetition of the last *contretemps* should occur. The dog was working at a crevice

in the rocks in which I calculated the leopard was ensconced, and I cautiously approached to investigate. I could, however, neither hear nor see anything at first, but after a while, as my eyesight got accustomed to the gloom, I made out two balls of fire. They might have been one yard, they might have been fifty yards away, I could not tell—that did not signify—and taking steady aim between them, I let go. The report was so deafening that I could not have heard any other sound had there been one, but the "eyes" had gone out when the smoke cleared away and all was still. After waiting a while, I cut a limb or two as straight as I could find, and splicing them into one long one pushed the pole up into the recesses of the aperture, and withdrawing it, after twisting it round against some soft substance, found, sure enough, leopard's fur on the end. I now felt no hesitation about going in, though this was more easily said than done. I could with difficulty squeeze myself through the narrow opening, and to do so caused me excruciating pain. Once through, however, I had more room, and soon reached my quarry, which I got at last into the daylight, not a little glad to be out of the business so well. I then had to skin her—a female, and doubtless mate to the one I had killed in the morning.

Then returning to where I had left the other skin I made tracks for the waggon, and I don't think any hunter was ever more glad when he reached his camp than I was on that particular day—sore, tired, and feeling I don't know how, after my mauling. I was pretty stiff and used up for many days afterwards, but pulled through all right and never experienced any really serious results from my adventure.

At another time I was riding leisurely along, scanning the veldt with my glass which I usually carried with me. On this occasion, at any rate, I might have missed seeing the long necks of a herd of giraffes, which were feeding in a clump of mimosa far away in the distance, if I had been without it. Here was a chance not often met with, for though giraffes are fairly plentiful, they keep towards the interior of the Desert, and it is always an event to come across them—a kind of red-letter day. Some half-starved bushmen, too, had been begging around for food, and this removed the compunction I might have had in killing these beautiful creatures, for I knew that every particle of meat would be consumed. My horse was in fairly hard condition, so I dismounted and saw to the girths, etc., in anticipation of a smart gallop, and set out towards the clump of mimosas.

which stood a little apart from the main growth of timber. By using judgment I managed to cover quite a distance without actually showing myself, but as I neared them, the task of stalking became more difficult, and I had to dismount and lead my horse down a ravine and up the stiff incline on the other side in order to get into a better position before making a start in earnest. On reaching the top of the klocf side, I mounted and made all speed through the thorns to where I imagined I should emerge into the open veldt nearly opposite to the giraffes. I was not far out in my reckoning, and as I came into view and set spurs to my horse the game simultaneously took the alarm and went pacing heavily away. I soon, however, reduced the distance between us, and then endeavoured to head them off and turn them in the direction of the waggon. In this I partly succeeded, but as we were at least four miles from the waggon it was no easy matter. Still, luck favoured me to a certain extent and I managed to set them going in a line, which, if they kept it, would take them within half a mile of camp. I knew, however, that they would not hold to it as it led direct to the river and uneven ground, and no giraffe likes unlevel country; it was all I could do with the aid of

my staunch little horse, to prevent them veering off into the open veldt.

It was stiff work, this hard riding and holloing, but I kept at it as long as I dared, and then, giving a spurt, got up nearly to the herd, and singling out a fat cow, gave her the contents of my carbine. I could not have been more than a dozen paces from her when I fired and plainly saw where the bullet struck her, right behind the short ribs; all the same she kept on as though she were unharmed, whilst I had to slacken speed in order to reload. Before I had got my horse well into his stride again, the giraffes were far ahead, but I had the satisfaction of seeing my cow go over forward, and as I galloped up, she was just drawing her last gasp. Though I put a bullet into her with little compunction, I hated to see those lustrous eyes with their mute appealing glances, and it is a feeling I have never really been able to overcome. Seeing she did not need further attention, I again gave chase, thinking she would do for the bushmen if I managed to secure a calf for our own use, of which there were two in the herd, now reduced to six. Noticing that they were materially changing their course, I galloped out almost at right angles to the line they were taking, and at the same moment the

bushmen, who had got wind of the business, came running up in the opposite direction and commenced shouting and capering. This further disconcerted the giraffes, and they headed back again in a direction parallel with the river, on seeing which I lost no time in taking advantage. Urging my horse to the utmost, I managed to intercept them as they passed, a quarter of a mile above the waggon, and rolled a calf over with a single shot through the shoulder blades. This was all I wanted, and I expect all my horse wanted too, so I let the others go; and vaulting off my panting steed—I was quite blown myself—I watched the majestic animals until their long necks disappeared in the far distance. By this time the bushmen had collected. When I told them that they could have the cow, they were in a state of frantic delight. They soon hauled the calf up to the waggon and departed in a neck-and-neck race to begin their disgusting orgies.

IV.

LEOPARD HUNTING IN BECHUANALAND.

Some eight years ago, I found myself stranded in Bechuanaland, whither I had followed a force of irregular cavalry, raised by Colonel Methuen, for operating, should the exigency arise, against the Transvaal Boers, whose filibustering raids across the border were getting worse and worse. The regiment was to be mainly made up of men who were at home in the saddle and with the rifle,—hunting men and yeomanry; but the order had been issued from the War Office that no man was to be attached except in England. This I did not know until I reached Liverpool from New York, but I got my papers in order and with an additional testimonial from my late colonel, I decided to follow out the force, which had just sailed in the "Pembroke Castle" and the "Spartan," and was soon aboard the "Mexican" *en route* for the Cape.

Arrived at Cape Town, I went up to the headquarters of the Inniskilling Dragoons at the Castle, where Major, now Colonel Martin, received

me with great kindness; but, although he considered my papers all that could be required, he strongly advised me to give up the idea, so far as this regiment went, for the reason above stated. To cut my story short, however, after following the Dragoons up as far as Mafeking to no purpose, I returned to Kimberley and the Orange River. Here, various causes standing in the way of my purchasing a waggon and oxen (for my expenses had been heavy), yet wishing to make another trip down the river, I conceived the idea, as a boat would also have cost time and money, of constructing a raft and thus transporting my few necessary effects, camping on the banks as inclination led me, or as I fancied the locality favoured sport. I had had too much experience among floating logs whilst lumbering in America not to feel at home at this kind of work; and all in all, though I did not travel very far, I spent one of the most enjoyable trips I ever had. It was so different, too, along the river, which was well shaded and cool, to what it was on the sandy veldt, which extended as far as the eye could reach,—an arid plain hardly broken except by the numberless ant hills and the line of mountains in the far distance. Entomology and ornithology I could also study to my heart's content, and I

could generally get a buck when I wanted one; whilst the animals I was mainly seeking—leopards —were far from uncommon, as they could procure food and could lie up pretty well in security. All along either side of this fine river is a wide belt of "wait-a-bit" thorns and bush timber, on which lovely green beetles played in great profusion. I caught numbers, every one of which brought me in 3*d.* in Cape Town, for jewelry purposes. I had seen beetles set up in a similar fashion in Rio de Janeiro and so had an eye to possible business; as also, we used to get alligators' teeth down in Alabama and Florida, but these creatures have got so scarce now that it hardly pays to hunt them.

Having got everything fixed on my raft, and as the river hereabouts was familiar to me, I had no difficulty in making a landing, as I had proposed, some twenty miles further down, passing the ford to Hope Town on my way. Among other things I had with me a hammock and a poncho which I had used out in the Banda Orientale, both of which, besides being of the greatest use, went into very small compass. The boxes were lined with tin on account of the ants, whose pertinacity knows no ceasing. My craft was soon made fast and secure from any rise in the water, which it is just as well

to guard against; and the hammock having been slung up and my paraphernalia ranged near by, the rest of the evening was spent in making my camping place as convenient as could be. After taking a cup of coffee without milk and a snack or two of spring-bok, I literally turned in, with my carbine beside me and my dog curled up at my feet, to be lulled to sleep by sounds as familiar as those heard on a summer day at home in old England—the cooing of the turtle-dove and the merry laughter of the wryneck. Though hot in the daytime the nights are cold out here, and the mist in the morning was such that I could scarcely see the opposite bank of the river. As the sun rose it speedily dissipated all this, and a little way out on the veldt and beyond the timber, it was as sultry as ever. I could spy some small specks away to the southward, and as a fresh bit of venison would be an agreeable change, I started after what I knew would furnish me therewith, if I could manage to circumvent them. This was not particularly difficult, for I could keep myself covered by one ant-hill or another, and I got my buck all right, sending the rest bounding away with tremendous jumps. The ominous darkening of the horizon had not escaped my notice, but almost before I was aware of it the

hot sand came stinging like so much small shot against my face. In such cases, the only thing to be done is to throw yourself flat on your chest and hold your breath till the hot blast has blown over. The sand storm did not last many minutes, but the thunderstorm immediately burst in such a way as it only does in South Africa, and I speak from experience both of this, as well as other parts of the world. It was over almost as soon as it came, and for a short space the sandy veldt looked like a sheet of water, which, however, was sucked up in no time, the sun bursting forth in all its splendour and drying me, drenched as I was, before I could get my buck back to camp.

After skinning my buck and making the hind portions into ham, and getting a meal of fresh meat, I set out along the bank of the river to see if I could hit upon any leopard spoor. I had not gone far before I came to the remnants of a porcupine. Leopards appear to have a great partiality for the flesh of these animals, and as they are common enough along the Orange River, it doubtless accounts for the presence of their persecutors. I hunted for the rest of the day without finding any more signs, although I felt satisfied that there were some leopards in the neighbourhood, so I could only

postpone my search until the morrow. In the morning I got afloat once more, and dropped about four miles lower down to the place I had turned back from the day before. This did not occupy long, and I was soon fast again in a kind of back-water, with my traps once more on dry land. I was eager to follow up the leopard, which I was confident had gone down, not up, the river; indeed, I had hardly proceeded a quarter of a mile before I found pug-marks, and quite fresh ones, too, where he had gone down to drink. This time the heavy rains had not washed all trace of spoor and scent away, and my dog was able to pick it up easily. Seeing that my carbine was all right and everything in its place to my hand, I followed "Snap" with some difficulty, for I did not want him to come to an untimely end, which might not be improbable if I was unable to keep him back somewhere within bounds. The spoor led along the bank for some distance close to the river, at which the leopard had occasionally halted, either to drink, or to watch for a stray fish; for these latter they will scoop out with the dexterity of a racoon, as I myself once saw. In fact, they will eat almost anything that moves—young birds, and for the matter of that old ones too, when they can surprise them.

A cat which has run wild at home is a fair example of what the leopard is on a larger scale.

The dog now came to a point at the foot of a tree, and after some search, for the foliage was very luxuriant, I could distinguish the leopard lying full length along a branch, his head between his paws, his eyes being just discernible, and that was all. I could not get a good shot at him, the angle was too acute to fire with safety at his head, and unless I got directly under him I could not see him at all, whilst the limb he was stretched out upon practically protected him at all vital points. Now and again he would just crane over a little and then draw back before I could get a proper sight, making all the time a snarling, purring noise. Under the circumstances it would have been risky to have attempted a shot, so I was compelled to wait until he gave me some sort of a chance. To have had him come tumbling down wounded was not a bit to my fancy. In the meantime I looked about to see if there were another tree near by up which I could climb, and I actually did ascend one, but had to give up the idea, for I could not get a sight of him at all, so I returned to the ground. Once or twice I raised my weapon, only to lower it, feeling it was safer to wait. On a sudden he raised his head,

as if some sound at a distance had arrested his attention, for he gazed right away into space. This was my opportunity—not a very fine one certainly, for there was quite a network of small branches intervening—but I got a pretty fair sight and let him have it. Down he came almost before I could jump to one side, with a thump that would have stunned him, one would imagine, even if the bullet had not smashed his jaw and gone out through the top of his head, bursting an eye in its course. He was as dead as a door nail, and a beautifully marked full-grown young male, his teeth being perfect. As I was only about a mile from camp, I got his skin off at once, and taking the skull went back and dressed the skin there and then, before it should get covered with flyblows.

I lost no time, however, in getting back to the spot where I had killed him, for it struck me there might be something more than I knew about in his having had his attention diverted from myself and the dog. So I cast about once more, still going along the river, letting "Snap", who was well up to the work, do the hunting, whilst now and again I added a brilliant beetle to my collecting box. Passing two or three gullies without making anything further out, I began to think that it must have been the

whistle of an antelope that had attracted the leopard's notice. He showed, however, the same intentness of gaze as I remembered in a jaguar I once killed under somewhat similar circumstances, and whose dying roar brought a second one on my track in less than no time, giving me a stiffish scuffle. It is in cases such as these that the science of woodcraft comes in handy, careful notice of surrounding signs and actions usually enabling one to come to a correct conclusion. I had been keeping fairly close to the river-bank, for I held to my theory that there was another leopard not far from where I shot the last; so I turned about, after a couple of miles, and worked back along the margin of the bush, near the veldt, carefully beating any likely-looking spots. Half-way or so back was a dense mass of thorns with a lot of rock and boulders, looking a very likely place to hold such game. I went out to the veldt side to reconnoitre, and there immediately found fresh pug-marks, not only of one, but of three leopards; evidently those of an old one and her cubs. This at once accounted for the demeanour of the one I had got, and as a leopard with young, or for the matter of that any animal almost in such circumstances, requires extra care in tackling, I called the dog to heel, whilst

I cogitated a bit what course to pursue.

Examining the tracks, I put the cubs down as half grown. I also made a *détour* of the clump of bush and satisfied myself that the game was at home. Returning to the spot where I had first marked them, I followed them in slowly, "Snap" being taken up with a piece of string. He soon commenced to get very excited, and I could myself smell the taint which always hangs around the lair of the carnivora, be they birds or beasts. The spoor was easy enough to keep, as the path had been used many times, and the leopard, dragging her prey along, had beaten it down. I had my carbine ready for a rapid shot, for I felt sure we were coming close to, and had hard work to keep the dog from breaking away. Luckily the wind was in my favour, and all at once I came right in sight of the leopards, the old one and two cubs, almost as large as she was, basking in the sun in an open space in the glade. I don't think she saw me, as from where I stood I was completely hidden in dense foliage, but she stared hard in my direction, half-rising to her feet, the tip of her tail twitching from side to side, or, more correctly speaking, beating the ground. It was as pretty a sight as I had ever seen, these beautiful cats, but I had no time for such thoughts. One of

the cubs attempted to play with the bobbing tail, and this seemed to irritate her, for she turned and gave the offending youngster a tap with her paw that sent him sprawling. In doing so she gave me a fine broadside and I fired, dropping her at once, though she scrambled to her fore feet in an instant. I could see that her hind parts were paralysed; she was shot through the spine; and as she turned to gnaw the wound I quickly got another cartridge in and hit her through the neck.

But this time the two cubs had recovered from their surprise, and as the old leopard appeared to be done for I gave one of them a bullet in the chest, the other turning tail and scampering off into the bush with "Snap" (who had got loose) at his heels, whilst I stepped into the open and let the one I had wounded have another ball, catching him in the orifice of the ear and killing him instantly. As I approached them the old one rolled over, and I was about to fire at her again, when I noticed that her eye was already glazed, and it would only be wasting ammunition. After a hasty glance of admiration I left them as they lay and hurried after the yelping terrier, who from the sound appeared to have come to a halt, though I could hear no snarling. Before, how-

ever, I could catch up, the leopard must have made another start. The scrub was thick just here, and the everlasting "wait-a-bit" thorns retarded my progress considerably, besides punishing me not a little. Still I pushed on into the open veldt just in time to see the two making across for the timber on the other side the bend in the river. I was beginning to feel a bit winded, and was not sorry when further angry yelps and growling showed that the cub had again been brought to bay. Getting up as quickly as possible, I found that the dog had been having a rough time of it. He was scored badly down the side, and instead of being a white terrier was a ghastly red one, though for the time being it did not appear to inconvenience him much. He was vigorously barking and jumping around a lot of loose boulders, among which the leopard had evidently taken refuge. I could not, however, induce him to go in, and although I have had several good terriers for this kind of shooting none of them cared to go to ground after such game. I began to fear I should have to give him up, but got together a lot of the driest herbage I could find, and, making a couple of squibs by extracting the powder from two cartridges, I went to work to try and make him bolt, as his cover was not

very large. Cutting as long a stick as I could find, I took a page out of my pocket diary and rolled the squibs in it, binding them to the thin end of the stick, which I bandaged thickly round with dry grass and leaves for a yard or more, and then pushed it in where the leopard had entered and ignited it well all around, also heaping more dry stuff about the opening so as to make as much smother as possible. The smoke soon began to escape from the crevices, though the leopard did not appear to take any notice of it; but as soon as the fuses began to fizz and sputter, it was more than he could stand, and out he dashed, almost upsetting me in his rush. I had, however, picked up my carbine and fired at him, just as he was disappearing into the cover. I distinctly heard the pat of the bullet and was about to follow, when I saw that the poor dog demanded my attention, so picked him up. The scratches were ugly ones, and I could see that if I did not attend to them at once I might lose him; I therefore carried him back to camp and washed, stitched, and dressed his wounds. I returned afterwards, to try and follow the leopard, but could not find any further trace of him except blood marks. I therefore went and skinned the other two, and made up my mind to leave the cub I had wounded

until the morrow. I tracked him up next day and found him dead, about a quarter of a mile from where I had fired at him, my lucky shot having gone through his heart.

V.

AFTER GRIZZLIES IN THE ROCKIES.

EARLY in the seventies, before General Custer and his band were annihilated in the Indian rising, I was with my chums, Gerard, and Fawcett, trapping and hunting on the Eastern spurs of the Rockies in Wyoming, or, more correctly speaking, in the Bighorn Mountains. Then, game, big and small, was plentiful, and a hunter could make money trapping although prices for furs did not rule anything so high as they do now. I myself have been glad to take twenty dollars for two good black bears' hides; last winter (1892) I was paid twenty-three dollars for one, and all in proportion with occasional fluctuations. Now, a buffalo robe can only be purchased by the well-to-do; whereas at the time of which I write these animals roamed the plains in countless thousands. At the present day their sum total is practically represented by a few hundred head which are protected in the National Yellowstone Park. I heard a short time since that a guide sent out to report on the game in the Government Reservations had brought back a very favourable account, both

as to the way in which the Buffalo had multiplied and as to the number of Elk (the name by which the Wapiti [*Cervus Canadensis*] is always known in the States) which he saw in the Hayden Valley. Bears, too, were common enough, and much exciting sport has fallen to my lot in these regions. The Grizzly proper, or silver-tipped (so called on account of each hair being light at the extremity, giving it its grizzled appearance), and the Cinnamon bear (a nearly allied species both as to habits and localities, although omnivorous), are so practically carnivorous as to make them stand apart from the black bear. I don't say that the latter does not eat meat—I have myself trapped them on meat—but it is an exceptional trait and more often caused by necessity than inclination. With the two former it is quite the reverse. Nothing in the way of animal food comes amiss to them, and their great strength, and (for unwieldy-looking animals) speed, make it an easy matter to procure fresh meat, whether it be of deer or weakly calves, even the buffalo itself falling a victim. Neither do they hesitate to attack the homesteads and carry off sheep or anything they can get hold of, if pressed by hunger.

The knowledge that bears were to be met

with in the vicinity was the chief reason why we had located ourselves in this region. I had received my introduction to *Ursus horribilis* the previous year, and consequently, as is the wont with trappers, my experience was acknowledged. Gérard had never seen other than Barnum's grizzlies, but he was a skilled hunter and had spent years at a similar life in Quebec Province and down East among moose and cariboo. Fawcett was "green", and as the poor fellow has long since become a hunter in the Happy Hunting Grounds this remark cannot hurt his feelings.

Having settled on a suitable spot for our winter sojourn—I may mention incidentally that furs (bears excepted) are not marketable except when trapped in the cold season—we soon had a log shanty fixed up; and, with the necessary accessories, transported thither by friendly squatters, we were speedily as ship-shape and comfortable as trappers are apt to be, if comfort it can really be called. Traps for bears, wolves, foxes, and the smaller fur-bearing animals were looked over and boiled in water to which a quantity of maple bark and bee's-wax had been added. This renders them non-corrodible, less observable, and also less likely to retain any taint from the human hand. It goes without saying that hands are always covered when

setting traps. We were on the banks of a small lake bearing the delectable name "Mud;" some bass were speared and a deer shot on the day after our arrival, and things were pretty well in readiness for our campaign. I wonder whether ladies at home ever give a thought to the hardships and privations undergone by those who procure for them their luxurious winter wraps and tippets. Nevertheless it is an exciting and fascinating life, and one seldom entirely given up whilst health lasts. After years of wandering, followed by a year or two of English life, the writer has once more seriously taken up the old calling, preferring the back woods and their concomitants to all the luxury and pleasures of cities. We had been in camp some days before any signs of bears being in the neighbourhood became apparent. It was getting colder, and the snow was now too deep to get over without snow shoes. Well, we got our two bear traps out—formidable things, and personally I do not care for them, at any rate for grizzlies. Should a grizzly get trapped and by any means extricate himself, there is likely to be additional trouble; and more than one life has been lost by a bear getting out of the trap at an inopportune moment. The traps are awkward things to set, too, without assistance.

Only eighteen months ago, an Englishman named Ryan who from practice one would have thought safe to handle them, was missing one night, and when the search party which went out found him, he was lying dead over his trap, held fast by both hands. This was in Northern Michigan.

The traps set, baited with a chunk of deer's meat, one at the end of the lake and the other some distance up the slope, we went about our every-day duties around our smaller quarry, our lines of traps extending many miles, each of us having his deputed round, with share and share alike at the season's end. That day there were four skunks, a fox, several musk-rats, a couple of martens and a lynx, which last Fawcett shot—not such a bad day's work. Then came an early turn-in, in hopes of something more exciting on the morrow. The morning, however, showed the traps untouched, but the baits gone; the next day the same. The prairie wolves, or coyotes, are the greatest nuisances, taking the baits. They cannot spring the trap, as it is set for a much heavier animal. On the third morning, however, our eyes were gladdened by a huge object cutting capers at the end of the lake; we could command a good view of this point from our shanty about a mile and

a half away. Work first and play afterwards is the order, so leaving breakfast, and merely pausing to heap up wood in the stove, we all three proceeded to investigate matters. When we had got within a couple of hundred yards, or, as we would say forty rods, of the bear, he began to redouble his efforts to break loose. Although I had every confidence in the trap, which had been tested, it was not with the most comfortable feelings that we watched the grizzly's frantic rage. If he had managed to get out, things would have been unhealthy. I knew what a lot of killing they required, and potting at him as Fawcett wanted to do would only have added to his fury. We accordingly advanced much nearer and watched for an opportunity of giving him a shot which would tell. This was no easy matter, as he was never still an instant. The brain-pan in a bear is very small and is furthermore surrounded by so much bone that it is difficult to sight it, whilst a good deal of risk is attached to blazing into the huge carcass. Gerard was anxious to draw first blood, and did so, with the result that with a snarl such as only a grizzly can make, he was at us, as far as his tether would permit him; and I suppose, by the entire weight of the bear being concentrated in this supreme

effort, one of the chains became detached from its log, leaving him with but one weight to cumber the trap. "Judas," irreverently blurted out Fawcett, at the same time blazing away without any apparent effect. This sort of thing would never do; so exhorting Fawcett to stop his fooling, and reserve his firing for a steadier shot, and telling Gerard to hold himself in readiness behind me, I walked straight up to the bear, which had got itself and the log into a narrow streamlet at the tail of the lake, and would I feared soon buckle up the single chain if he could get a firm purchase upon it. He would not stand up, which was what I wanted; I could then have shot him at the junction of the throat and brisket, a very deadly place. As it was I went right on, put my carbine almost within a yard of his head, and gave him a bullet in the eye before he could recover himself, effectually laying him out. Gerard, however, sent his spherical ball into the other eye to make quite certain. From this short encounter it will be seen that it is not all child's play dealing with a trapped grizzly bear; in fact, at one time during this adventure, I must confess to having had sundry misgivings as to how it was going to end, and a pretty scuttling would have arisen had the bear suc-

ceeded in getting loose, wounded as he was into the bargain.

I was seeking deer some weeks afterwards, meat being wanted in camp, and had killed, gralloched, and hung a buck in a tree until the hand-sled could fetch the carcass, when I saw some day-old bear tracks near by, and determined, as the hour was still early, to follow them up instead of wasting time in returning for a companion. These bears travel long distances, and the one I was after might be miles and miles away by the next day; travelling on the uneven ground is, too, very fatiguing, especially when the trail points uphill as this seemed to do towards a belt of timber abutting on a precipitous ravine. It became still more tiring as the ground became rougher, until fresh energy was put into me by the sight of quite recent tracks intermingling with the older ones; they also got more frequent, leading me to believe that I was coming up with the bear. It was quite evident that he had been there that morning, as the crust of snow around the claw marks was crisp and intact, so I halted to deliberate, for I had no desire of being ambushed by my cunning adversary. An additional element of danger attached to the hunting of these animals is their common habit of roaming in pairs;

molested or unmolested they take each other's part. Now-a-days, with my Winchester repeater, I should have felt much more confidence; but the carbine I was then using was a converted Enfield—a breechloader, certainly, but it required capping, and that took time with fingers enveloped in mits and none too warm. Still it was an excellent weapon and, so far as accurate shooting went, would bear comparison with the costliest modern rifle. The snow was much crisper now, and, excepting the drifts, I managed to keep on without great inconvenience. There is a wonderful difference between snow-shoeing in open level country, without obstacles to speak of, and travelling as I was then doing after dangerous game where the ground was rugged and the brush and timber very hindering. The shape of the shoe varies very much according to the locality, mine being round-toed instead of pointed, about five feet long, ending in a long point, and fourteen inches in width. From all appearances I was rapidly overhauling the bear, and indeed almost directly I sighted him on the top of a bluff above me. He saw me, too, and came right on to the edge, some thirty feet above where I was standing. Now was my opportunity, and, taking careful aim, I planted a ball right between his eyes as he looked directly

at me. Down he went with a grunt, never stirring, whilst the blood spurted out of the hole in a stream which almost reached me as I stood ramming in another cartridge with all speed. It was not, however, needed; I felt sure by the way the blood came that the bullet had gone right through the skull into the vertebra of the neck which I afterwards found was the case. I have this identical bullet among my curios now, together with many others, which, had they the power of speech, could each a tale unfold. I never saw a bear die so easily, and beyond the last convulsions after having literally bled to death, he hardly moved. Getting his hide off was the next job, after which it was strung aloft, out of the reach of wolves until the hand-sled could be brought up for it the next morning. It was easier work returning; a hard day's work had made me feel "peckish," and I was soon back to my deer from which I took the heart and tongue for a fry, leaving the carcass to be brought along with the bear-skin.

Next morning Fawcett and I started for the trail, Gerard staying in camp casting bullets for his antiquated rifle. This was quite a gun, and looked as if it might have been made in the "year one". Originally a flint-lock, this part

of it had been modernised with a hammer and nipple; the barrels being one on top of the other instead of side by side, and it carried shot as well as ball. It was highly ornamented with brass and inlaid with silver, and reminded one somewhat of an Arab ghazil about the stock. All the same it was a useful piece in his hands, and he generally did good work with it. Our spoil was soon roped on to the sleigh and hauled down to the shanty.

We got two Cinnamon bears during our stay in these regions. As the name implies, the colour of this bear is sandy brown; he is not one whit less savage than his darker confrère, perhaps a little less bulky and that is all, and to all intents and purposes worth as much, though the hide of neither is of so much value as that of a black bear. The incessant demand for the skins of these latter, more especially by military outfitters, has told its tale, their price being doubled; and besides what I said about my own last black bear hide, I know a trapper who got forty dollars, or £8 of our money, for a green one last winter. But it was an exceptionally fine skin and was probably destined for the headgear of our Grenadier Guards, as it was shipped to London. One cinnamon we caught much in the same way as we did the grizzly, only that we

took particular care that there should be no repetition of the breaking-away business. I prefer a heavy clog so as almost to force a bear to stand still; but this is quite a matter of opinion, and your traps and chains must stand the test. The trap was set away back, so that we could not tell whether our bear was in without going some distance. We decided all three would go, and if the trap was unsprung we would take our respective routes around the smaller ones. But he was there right enough; and not only one, but two. That is, one was close by the trapped one, and immediately we were sighted it came on us at a run which necessitated instant action. Myself first, Gerard second, and Fawcett third was the hasty arrangement, and then be guided by circumstances, but on no account was either to fire before I had done so, as he would then have got within short range. I knew Gerard would wait but was rather afraid of Fawcett, who had not yet had sufficient practice to enable him to await a charging bear with equanimity, or to wean himself of the dangerous practice of firing too soon, thereby increasing the danger by aggravating the animal without the shot having any telling effect. I kept him covered as he came shambling on to within a dozen yards, and then put a bullet into his open mouth.

This staggered but did not stop him. Gerard now fired and smashed his shoulder, bringing him down, Fawcett also letting him have his barrel. Having by this time got another shell in, I ran up before he could scramble on to his legs and shot him again in the head. This settled him, and we were able to turn our attention to the other bear in the trap, where there was a mad carrying on whilst we had been engaged with number one. He, or rather she, was fast held as we could see, for one forepaw was caught well up and we had not much difficulty in despatching her. It was a relief when they were both laid out and we could contemplate their huge forms without danger.

VI.

HUNTING WAPITI AND MOOSE IN NORTH AMERICA.

The Wapiti (*Cervus Canadensis*), or elk, as it is called by the hunters and trappers of the regions it inhabits, is, next to the American moose and European elk, the largest of the *Cervidæ*, and frequently stands four feet six or seven inches at the shoulders, with a spread of antler of four feet or over. I have myself killed a head measuring fifty-one inches from tip to tip of horns. Wapiti used to be common enough in most of the Northern states but now are very local, though they may be met with frequently in certain parts of the Rockies, and in Washington Territory, particularly where there are numerous herds. In British Columbia it still holds its own; but unless the laws relating to hunting all descriptions of large game are revised and vigorously enforced, the wapiti will ere long share the fate of the buffalo. In the Hayden Valley, in the near neighbourhood of the National Yellowstone Park where they are protected, numbers have recently been seen.

Some of the finest elk it has fallen to my lot to bag, I got in Wyoming and Montana.

About a week after we killed our two cinnamon bears, Gerard and I, having noticed elk tracks, set off in a hurry to follow them up, leaving Fawcett, who had sprained his ankle, to take care of the shanty and do such odd jobs as he was able. The snow was still good; by this I mean it bore us up on our snow-shoes, though it would not bear the weight of game as well. This was just what we wanted, as if we wounded any elk, they would sink into the snow each time they plunged, and so get fatigued when hard pressed. There is no more cunning animal than the wapiti on ground advantageous to himself, but at the time we were hunting the chances were very much in our favour. It was necessary to get on with all speed, as the wapiti travel great distances, and even on the snow, when going carefully at their leisure, they might be a long way in advance of us already, and it was a matter of great importance to us not to have to carry our venison farther than we could help. We went along with the greatest caution; the tracks looked perfectly fresh; anyway they were not there the previous day when we had gone round our traps. Any moment we might come upon them; there were five—two fawns and three full grown ones, one of which was, by the size of his footsteps, evidently a

fine fellow, and we were both on the alert.

On we went for more than a mile which, by the way, is quite a distance when the country is rough and there are plenty of fallen logs in the way. Over these the deer had stepped as if they were no obstacles whatever, but with us it was very fatiguing work. Some would doubtless remark, "If the snow would allow the wapiti to travel, why would it not bear up the hunters without snow-shoes?" To these I would say, "*Experientia docet*," and nothing more. We were, however, overhauling our game; the signs around us led us to this conclusion as the twigs and branches were quite freshly browsed, also the droppings were not half an hour old. So we just called a few moments halt and got our breath a bit. We had the wind in our teeth luckily, the elk having moved up it; and, as it was blowing quite hard, we did not imagine that our game would either scent or hear us. Still, we again proceeded more carefully than ever, expecting every instant to come upon our quarry, though another half hour elapsed before we both simultaneously dropped to the ground, having each caught sight of the tips of a pair of antlers just over the bush ahead of us, not more than twenty-five paces in advance. A glance one at the other

was enough to transmit our plan of action without a sound; and debouching right and left, still keeping as low as we could, we described curves outwards and inwards for a few paces, and at a given signal rose to our feet. With the whistle of the old buck came the crack of our two pieces and down went the stag and one of the females, the latter to stop while the former scrambled to his legs again and went off after the others. I could see that his shoulder was smashed, as well as that he was bleeding profusely, and I knew that he would not go far; so getting another cartridge in I put up my sights and took careful aim at one of the fawns, or rather a half grown buck, which had veered off at the report, and in getting into line again with the other two deer gave me a pretty good broadside. I sighted his head, pulled the trigger, and down went his "flag" at the shot. I knew that he was well hit, for I saw the bullet strike him distinctly behind the shoulder, his bound having carried him thus far forward. Still, he went on with no other sign than the lowering of his tail, so I turned for the time being to my wounded buck, which had come to a standstill and looked very sick indeed, but vicious too. He faced around as I approached him and as well as he was able charged

me, and as he floundered past I stepped aside and rolled him over with a shot through the head which settled him. He was indeed a magnificent deer, with a head any hunter might prize. Had he not been crippled so, I should have had trouble with him, for like all male deer they use their feet with rapidity and precision as well as their horns.

This recalls to mind an incident which occurred to me only last winter in North Michigan (1892) and shows the vindictiveness of a wounded buck. I had shot, and to all appearance killed, a "white tail," at the same time wounding a doe accidentally, which latter I hastily followed, only to have to leave her for a time, though I eventually recovered her. Returning to my prostrate buck, which by the way had not so much as stirred, when I was a few yards away from him, to my surprise he suddenly jumped up and came for me. I had no time to raise my carbine, so fired from my hip, knocking off one of his horns about an inch from his head. This stunned him, and I was able to cut his throat. My first bullet had smashed his jaw just in front of his eyes, in fact had gone clean through his head and into the unfortunate doe behind him, searing a jagged wound in her chest and causing her death in a short time. As my buck would have

died from this ball, I got two deer with one bullet. Of course, no true hunter ever kills a doe or a fawn intentionally now, unless hard pressed for meat. Another incident, rather unusual, occurred to me at the same place. I and my companion had been watching unsuccessfully all day on a deer-run, and had exchanged signals for quitting our posts, when a bear came shuffling along followed by a foxhound, both evidently far spent. The hound would every now and then catch up with the bear and snap at him, Bruin turning round and showing fight without apparently doing much mischief. We had not much difficulty in coming up with and finishing the bear, and then turned our attention to the dog. He could not have gone very much further, poor fellow; he was badly lacerated and his feet perfectly raw, so we carried him to our shanty and bathed and nursed him and he soon got about again all right. No one coming around to claim him, we brought him back with us and an excellent dog he has proved.

But I must get way back to our hunting ground out West, where I left my dead and wounded elk. I followed the young deer for a mile without coming up to him, although there was plenty of blood along his track. So as there was sufficient venison now to last us a long

time, and a good deal of work to do getting the same ready and down to camp, I gave him up and returned to where Gerard had already skinned and was quartering his doe, preparatory to hanging it in a tree till the hand-sled could be brought for it. I therefore set to work to do likewise with my buck. With large game, which is required for meat, it is better to divide it conveniently before it gets frozen as stiff as a rock. After we had finished, Gerard packed up some choice bits in his deerskin, whilst I hoisted my buck's head on to my shoulders, and pretty glad I was when I reached our shanty and could relieve myself of its weight. It took me the rest of the day to prepare and dress the skin of the head, so that it could be stored away for future mounting. Next day we hauled the sled along to our trees and there left it, whilst we just, for satisfaction's sake, took up the tracks of the fawn I had lost the day before. A mile further than I had followed it we came upon the few remnants of bones left where the wolves had pulled the animal down. As for the other two, even if we had wanted to follow, they had had time almost to have got into the next State.

Perhaps I ought really to have given precedence to the chase of the moose. This deer

(*Cervus alces*) is out and away the largest of all the *Cervidæ*, and is the true elk. They were pretty plentiful in Montana, north of where we camped, and not unfrequently were to be met with in our neighbourhood. It should, however, be distinctly understood that we were not on a hunting expedition after such game. We were trappers pure and simple, depending upon the returns of our furs for a livelihood. Of course, should any moose or wapiti cross our track we generally followed, as it meant venison in bulk, though we were never really stinted. Then again the heads are valuable. But at the same time we were not in a position to transport long distances. Again, the chase of a moose, with real hopes of success, should be arranged beforehand, and the propitious day waited for when the weather and especially the state of the snow is favourable. Only the other day I was talking with an old friend, a trapper and hunter, who perhaps had killed more deer and bears than any other man in the State, and who claims to have hunted the last moose recorded to have been met with in Michigan, a State once such a paradise for the sportsman. He tracked it for four successive days out of one county into another and so on and lost it after all, to his intense disgust. On the particular

morning when we noticed the moose tracks they looked so tempting that we decided to take them up; so we started off, two in advance, and the third some distance behind, which order we changed in turns. The tracks led down the lake and skirted it and on into the rough timber beyond. As there was a host of maples and willows along the margin of the lake, we were in hopes that the moose would stay and browse as they are particularly fond of these; nor were we wrong, for the snow had been well trampled thereabout, and even looked as if a "yard" had been contemplated, in which case our task would have been considerably simplified. In case some readers may not know what a "yard" means, I may explain that it is a tract where the snow is beaten down by the moose forming a kind of enclosure and where they rest and feed on such overhanging branches as they can reach, also peeling the bark from the trunks of the smaller trees, until they have eaten everything available, when they move on and make another lair. No such luck!—so on we went again, the tracks very plain, and every now and then a fresh trampled spot where the game had stopped to munch the lower branches or bend down a sapling. This they do by straddling it with their forelegs and pushing it down with their chest, until they can

walk along and feed on the topmost shoots. Here a black bear had crossed the tracks, or rather it had crossed that of the bear, and as the latter's hide is worth so many dollars, we must needs get both animals if possible. Gerard therefore went after the fur and I with Fawcett continued after the moose. As we were apparently nearing our game, I told Fawcett to leave the sled where it was and come along with me; he had become quite steady, and, poor fellow, had he lived would eventually have made a good hunter, though we used to laugh immoderately at him sometimes; indeed, we could not help it, and this was hardly encouraging to a tyro. The way he came running up one day, minus his rifle and with a face like a sheet, was too much for anyone's control of countenance. He had been following a wounded buck, and whilst jumping over a log, a bear had stood up and growled, completely demoralising him. We got his bear and buck, though, and found his rifle in the snow.

One would imagine that it would be an easy matter to discern such a ponderous animal as we were after, even amongst the leafless timber and undergrowth. But nothing of the sort. We were almost on top of the moose, a young bull, before we were fairly aware of his pre-

sence. He was lying down in a hollow, behind some small tamaracks, which had screened pursuers from pursued, until we were fairly face to face. He perceived us instantly, and was quickly on his feet, gazing wonderingly at the disturbers of his siesta; but only for a moment. Then he turned to make off, and as he did so we both fired. I hit him in the ribs, but Fawcett's ball tipped one of his palmated antlers. He spun round like a top and went for us straight away but we easily evaded him; the ground was bad for him to charge, whilst it favoured our dodging. As he rushed past I lashed at his hock with my hunting knife, but failed to reach him. I therefore returned it, and taking a cartridge from between my teeth reloaded before he made another onslaught, as he had lost sight of us amongst the thick tamaracks. I got another shot, but my bullet must have struck a tree; anyway, he was not affected by it, and I was wondering all the while why Fawcett did not shoot again. But he had got his rifle muzzle stopped with snow, and very wisely refrained from firing and running the risk of bursting the barrel. By this time the moose had commenced scattering us again, and evidently was very much in earnest. Somehow or other I could not get another favourable shot: either

Fawcett was in line or something interfered. I did not dare shoot until I saw I was certain to incapacitate him; he was sufficiently infuriated, and the undergrowth was so thick and the snow so deep where it was broken up and trampled, that our snowshoes were worse than useless, and it was a veritable rough and tumble, and one not at all creditable to me, at all events. I don't know how it is, but sometimes these awkwardnesses—save the word—occur, and nearly any hunter can refer to some incident during his career, when he could scarcely account for his clumsiness. I was not in the least afraid, in the true sense of the word, though I knew very well, if he caught either of us, it would be all up; neither had I lost my *sangfroid;* I was simply annoyed at myself because of being *maladroit,* and with the bull because he declined to be summarily laid out. I was afraid more on Fawcett's account, though the bull seemed to concentrate his fury altogether on me; probably because I was bigger and taller. Once I thought he had me; he had checked himself in his charge and turned as quickly as I dodged, and rising on his hind legs, struck at me like lightning with his forehoofs. I ducked as smartly as possible and caught a spent blow in the small of my back, but it was his last chance. Whilst he

was almost over me, I got a bullet into his chest at such close quarters that it knocked him out of time. To give him a *coup de grâce* was the work of an instant and I was glad to get a little breathing time. Of course it was unfortunate that Fawcett could not use his rifle, but it would have been dangerous to do so, and whilst he was endeavouring to clear the barrel the encounter was ended. As the sleigh was not far back, Fawcett fetched it, whilst I sat on my quarry to get a little wind. On his return we skinned and cut up our game and hauled a good part of it back to camp, crossing the lake for better travelling and being in a direct line to our shanty. On the way back we heard the crack of Gerard's rifle and another shot a little while afterwards, and rightly concluded that he was settling accounts with the bear, for in the course of the day he turned up with the news that he had overtaken him up the creek and had had very little trouble with him. He had also heard our firing and was rather exercised in his mind over our four shots.

VII.

LION HUNTING IN SOUTH AFRICA.

We had had very little sleep all night, owing to the prowling around and roaring of lions, attracted by the offal of a giraffe which I had shot the previous afternoon, and had had dragged bodily up to the waggon. The night was, however, so dark that I could not get a view, and, although I once thought I could make out the form of a lioness in the gloom, I concluded it wise not to fire, as, in the event of my only wounding her, she would have had much in her favour should she have attacked us afterwards in such darkness. I was not sorry when day broke, for the oxen and horses were very uneasy; but the skerm was good, having been strengthened a couple of days before, not that a lion having once made up his mind to attack would be kept out by such means. However, nothing occurred further than the roaring, and, after a hurried breakfast of coffee and giraffe steak, I and Bob, one of the boys, took up the spoor of the lion, which was plain enough about and around the camp. All we had left of the giraffe was represented by a few splinters of

bones which the hyenas had polished after the lion had gorged himself. For some distance along the river bank the country was pretty well wooded, whilst away to the north stretched the Kalahari, dotted here and there with scant timber clumps, but otherwise a vast sea of sand. I did not take my horse, as he was a bit stiff from his tumble of the day before; he had also somewhat renewed his lameness, which was scarcely to be wondered at considering the country I had been galloping him over. The lion had made direct for a thick patch of thorns and had evidently laid up there. I had no dog. My last had been so injured by a Koodoo bull, which had literally disembowelled him, that I had been compelled to shoot him. This was a greater loss to me than I can express, for a good terrier is simply invaluable.

The brush was so thick that it was next to impossible to get through it, and therefore, as it was clear around and there was no fear of making a conflagration, I set fire to it as the best apparent means of ousting our game. Telling Bob, my Kaffir driver, to keep close behind me, I went a little further round the cover and was just in time to see a lioness break away, but so far off that I did not fire, preferring to let her go in hopes of getting a more favourable

chance for a shot. By this time the blaze had got so powerful that we, too, were glad to get away from it; 140°, or thereabouts, was sufficient of itself as a temperature, without additional warmth. The lioness made straight for another bit of brush, whither we went after her, and though the thorns were quite thick enough, I decided to follow her in. My boy did not relish accompanying me, nor could I exactly blame him; for, though a fair hunter and a brave enough lad in ordinary, he did not like lions, his father having been killed, and his brother badly mauled, by one. It was rather difficult keeping her spoor, but after some trouble and considerable wear and tear, I espied her lying on a bare spot, watching me intently. Her head was resting between her paws, and, as quickly as possible, I fired between her eyes, and could have sworn I planted the bullet there, for she was not above thirty paces from me. Turning to take my spare carbine from Bob, I found that he had vanished. But the lioness never stirred, and I was hurriedly reloading when she suddenly jumped up and dashed further into the thicket. Unparliamentary language relieves the feelings, if nothing more; so after having anathematized poor Bob, I once more plunged after the lioness, wondering how our next meeting

would come off. There was plenty of blood, just where her head had lain, and also enough to guide me easily on the tracks she had taken. Indeed, before I was aware of it I was almost on the top of her. Stepping steadily back—she lay directly from me—I drew another bead between her ears at the base of her skull, and let fly. This time there could be no doubt as to its being effective, for, as I stood, I could see where the bullet had bored right into her brain. The lioness never so much as moved, so I stepped up and examined her. She was as mangy as she could well be, and almost as devoid of hair as an old buffalo, whilst her teeth were mere stumps, and yet she was not in such bad condition either. My first bullet had struck her too low beneath the eyes to reach her brain. It had torn through the cartilage of the nose and down her throat, momentarily stunning and so stupifying her that her last rush was a random one; but she was dead, to all intents and purposes, and doubtless was not in any need of my second ball. Her skin was simply of no value, and could only have been an eyesore, so I did not bother to take it off, only keeping her skull, and returned to the waggon to rate my heedless driver soundly.

My theory was that a lioness, old or young,

mangy or no, would probably not be altogether solitary, as is sometimes the case with animals of the male sex. Acting on this hypothesis I determined to cast around and see if I could not make out further signs of lions. I did not need meat. There was plenty for some time, and the additional excitement attached to hunting such game as I was after had a great fascination. It was no use my talking to Bob, and the other boy would probably have fled at the first sight of a lion, so I started off myself and tramped about until I was pretty well exhausted, without finding any further indications of "Isilouān." Much disgusted, I returned to camp, pleased that I had not decided to inspan and track farther, without satisfying myself that I had not passed a lion by; for I meant moving as soon as ever the moon was old enough to guide us at all. That evening I wiled away the time while daylight lasted, in cleaning the skull of the lioness and entering up my diary for the last week or so. My clothing also sadly needed patching up after the wait-a-bit thorns of the day before. Then I turned in early, and was soon in the realm of dreamland, to be awakened by the unmistakeable roar of a lion. I had been right after all, but only felt half pleased at being disturbed. There was nothing for it

but to mount guard again, and another broken night's rest was the consequence. Still the animals did not seem to approach any nearer. By the sound, they were evidently close by the water. As soon as the morning snack was over I set the boys to work to get everything in readiness for inspanning, and started off once again, this time keeping close along the bank of the river as the most likely way of coming across the spoor of the lion. I still thought it prudent to rest my horse, as when we got farther out into the veldt I should find it much more difficult to dispense with him than where I then was, with pretty well of cover. A couple of miles down the river I found where the lions had been drinking. There were several of them,—three any way, as I could distinguish from the pug marks—two full-grown ones and a cub, or cubs. This discovery caused me to reflect a bit as to the wisdom of proceeding single-handed. However, I must either give up the idea of the hunt altogether, or tackle them myself; for I had no confidence in the boys at such work, and I would much rather be without them than with them. Yet I felt it was a risky undertaking, and recollections of a previous encounter in which I had been knocked senseless by a lion in his death charge, flitted through my

"THE LION GAVE A LOW GROWL."—*Chapter vii.*

brain. If I had only had a dog I should not have thought anything of it, but my doubts were speedily dismissed and I stepped briskly forward. A lion dies a lot easier than a grizzly bear or a jaguar, as I had proved, and even a deer with a bullet through its heart will go far before it succumbs. Of the tiger I cannot speak, but the leopard and the jaguar, as also the puma, or mountain lion, partake more of the "cat" tenacity of life, than does the lion of South Africa.

The spoor led away towards some higher ground, intertwined with a tangled growth of creepers, and which looked just the kind of a harbour my game would be likely to take refuge in. I even thought I could discern some moving objects there. Anyway I followed the spoor right to where I had calculated I should find recent traces of the lions if they had not left the vicinity, and suddenly in the sun at full length among the rocky boulders I came across one. As I approached, he lazily raised his head and looked at me, at the same time uttering a low growl, as if annoyed at my intrusion. As he did not seem inclined to move further, and must have descended and climbed the side of the little kloof which intervened between us before he could reach me, though I did not

anticipate this, I walked on towards him, till I got to my side of the ravine, about thirty paces from him. He now seemed as if he had thought that he had permitted me to encroach far enough on to his domain, and raised himself on his fore-quarters, the tip of his tail twitching in a manner which I knew meant mischief should I wound him. If he moved away I might not get a better chance, though I wished the distance had been less; but on such occasions as these it does not do to hesitate long so I took aim at his shoulder, which presented a fair mark, and as I fired he fell over with a roar which was answered some little way off, doubtless by his mate. I speedily got another cartridge in, and, as he lay writhing, I ran down the bank and up towards him. He recovered a little as I got nearer, covering him all the while, and made a futile attempt to charge me. As he did so, I gave him another shot in the chest, dropping him, though he was up again directly and glaring at me viciously. Again his roars were answered, but I could see no signs of any other lions; in fact, I dared not take my eyes more than an instant off the one I had in hand. I still kept moving steadily up to him, and, having got as near as I thought advisable, just as he seemed about to make another effort to

come at me, I got a third bullet into him, this time catching him right in the ear and finishing him. He was a fully-grown young male, with a pretty fair mane, but nothing like so fine as others I have met with. I measured him by computation, by stepping, after I had stretched him out, and his length, from snout end to tip of tail, was a little over ten feet. I had no time then to see farther to him, but set about searching for the other lions, which were still in the underbrush adjoining. But though I beat almost every yard, as I thought, of cover, I could not come across them, they lay so close. Had they crossed the open, I could not very well have missed seeing them, as there was quite a distance of bare veldt all around the cover I was hunting through.

I was just persuading myself that they must have sneaked away, when a cub, about the size of a Newfoundland dog, jumped out of a thick patch and stood gazing steadily at me. I did not dare to empty my barrel at it, for I felt that its mother was near by. In a minute or so another cub followed the first and also took a good look at my doubtless unexpected person; and whilst my ideas were somewhat confused as to the really best course to pursue, a fine old lioness marched grandly out and stationed herself

beside her progeny; at the same time fixing me in anything but a pleasant manner with her penetrating orbs of almost indescribable green. I don't think she meant charging, however; one can tell intuitively pretty correctly when this is going to happen, and I believe she would have gone quietly away and taken her cubs with her, if I had not interfered. The tenets recently ventilated by a certain explorer of prominence, who evidently considers it a heinous crime to kill lions and similar gentle, useful creatures, had not then come to my knowledge, not that they would have influenced me a bit, if such had been the case, and her rich, tawny skin was sufficient temptation for me; so I aimed at her throat, which presents a much easier and safer mark than that of the lion, with its matted and tangled mane, sufficient at times to offer considerable impediment to a bullet. She must have raised her head as I fired, for my ball passed harmlessly by; fortunately, too, for me, missing the youngster immediately behind her, or a pretty hullabaloo might have been the result. All the same, I was in no enviable position, with my carbine empty in close proximity to these three cats. I followed the old adage of keeping my eye intently fixed on that of the lioness; whether that had anything to do with her refraining

from charging I will not pretend to say, but she did remain still whilst I mechanically reloaded and as mechanically brought up my weapon. Taking more careful aim this time, I potted her right in her white cravat, sending her in a somersault over the young ones to their no little astonishment, and, what with the roaring of the lioness and the row made by the cubs, there was quite a Bedlam. Then, appearing to realise their danger, they suddenly vanished into cover again, rather to my relief. My lioness struggled so violently that it was difficult to finish her off, but at last she gave me a chance to put her out of her misery by a bullet through her brain. As soon as she lay still I seated myself upon her and waited for the reappearance of the cubs, but, although I stayed until the sun had got very low, I never saw anything more of either of them. I therefore whipped off her hide, and rolling it up returned to the lion and served him likewise, getting through with the job before dusk. The hyenas could now worry at the carcasses, though I hoped I might find the skulls in the morning. Making my two skins into a bundle, though an unwieldy one, I carried it all right back to the waggon, not a little elated over my day's success.

VIII.

LIONS AGAIN.

We had trekked some dozen miles during the cool of night, and, having outspanned near the River Molopo, were busy making a skerm—a task always more or less arduous, for "wait-a-bit" thorns are not easy to manage, though they are invaluable as material. The boys had gone down to the river to fetch water, and I, taking a temporary rest, was scanning the veldt with my glass. I could make out some springbuck, also a few hartebeeste; but what rivetted my attention was a small bunch of gemsbuck in the far distance. We did not need meat, and there did not appear to be any bushmen just then about to warrant any sheer destruction of game; but gemsbuck, although fairly plentiful away in the interior of the desert, are hard enough to get, and to see them was to want a head. My horse was in hard condition and had had some stiffish gallops recently, so I saddled him up at once and determined to give chase as soon as the "boys"—my two Kaffirs—returned. Telling them to get on with the skerm, I set out at a canter, keeping well

to the right to get the advantage of the wind. The veldt was so open that stalking would have been hopeless, whereas, by the aid of my horse as a kind of blind, I might possibly get a shot before the gemsbuck took the alarm, even though they might see us, so long as they did not catch my taint. However, I had to go more directly towards them than I wished, for fear of stampeding the hartebeeste into them. These latter took the alarm and ambled leisurely away when I had proceeded about half a mile.

Where the gemsbuck were feeding was much rockier ground than that intervening between my camp and them; this was all sandy veldt, studded with the everlasting ant-hills, which, however, got sparser as I neared the game. I therefore slipped off my horse, getting him between myself and them for another hundred yards. The increasing anxiety of the animals, however, warned me that if I wanted to shorten my gallop by crippling one of them, I must lose no more time. Accordingly I halted, though the distance must have been a good three hundred yards, and, taking careful aim over my horse's withers at the one with the longest pair of horns, I fired. The horse stood like a rock, and I knew my aim had been good, even if the animal had not stumbled forward at the shot.

It quickly recovered though, and went away with the other four, just as if nothing had happened, at a good pace, heavy animals as they were, taking through and over the rugged boulders as easily as chamois. I knew, however, that the heavy army bullet would tell its tale. Instantly on firing I had vaulted into the saddle, and followed in pursuit. This was more easily attempted than done; and my surefooted horse was not able to negotiate the villainous country. I therefore pulled up, lest we should break both our necks, and as I did so had the satisfaction of seeing the gemsbuck drop in its tracks and remain there; whilst its companions only seemed to scamper the faster. On coming up, I found her, for it was a fine cow, stone dead. The blood was only beginning to trickle from the wound, and I had not noticed a spot anywhere on the ground she had gone over. On examination I found that the bullet had completely torn away the apex of the heart, and yet she had galloped at least a hundred yards at as great a speed as her companions, practically without bleeding a drop,—another instance of the extreme vitality of such creatures, which I have found even still stronger in the *Cervidæ* proper than in the antelopes. She had a prettily marked head, with a length of horns of three

feet eight inches. It was out of the question thinking of bagging any of the rest of the herd, so I threw the carcass across my horse and started back to camp.

A few days afterwards, as I was perched on the waggon box scraping at the skull of the gemsbuck, I hardly paid any attention to a pair of secretary-birds which were sailing right overhead. Their appearance, however, suggested snakes, and sure enough, there, as I looked around, among a few odds and ends, impervious to the irrepressive ants, was a large Puff adder. It had crept through the fence of thorns, and in evident excitement was surveying its novel surroundings with body half-raised. I did not like the look of this particular reptile a bit; but I did not intend that he should escape and be in the vicinity, though probably the secretary-birds would have seen to that; neither did I want to spoil his beautiful skin. There was, however, no help for it; I could see no object around sufficiently handy, so was constrained to put a charge of small shot into him, and I felt more comfortable after he had ceased wriggling than I did before. The shock given to a serpent by shooting it soon destroys the vitality, whereas chop off its head and it will squirm and strike at you, headless, for hours. I carefully skinned

it, rendered down the fat about the intestines, and put the fangs, with the sacs of venom attached, into a small vial.

One night I was awakened by the dog barking and the uneasiness of the oxen. I grabbed my carbine hastily and endeavoured to make out what caused the disturbance. By the meagre light diffused by the new moon I could just distinguish the forms of three large animals on the ridge above the camp. I could see that they were lions, and shook up the already awakening Kaffirs to make up the fire. I had half a mind to shoot, but thought it safer not to do so, the distance being too great; so I waited until morning, and as the flames began to shoot up and brighten the surroundings the lions became less plain to view. I distinctly saw them, however, move away over the ridge. The remainder of the night I sat up in case of any emergency arising, for the animals kept snorting and shifting restlessly, whilst every now and again came that rumbling roar, once heard *au naturel* never to be forgotten. But nothing occurred, although I was conscious of some creature prowling close around. The roar of the lions kept all the while sounding more and more distant, and as dawn began to break it ceased altogether. As soon as it was light enough to

see to any purpose, I stepped out, and as I did so, a large hyena jumped up from some bones lying near by, and made off. I fired at him and rolled him over, and before he could recover or the dogs get up, luckily got another bullet into him, this time right into the head. I fear he would have made short work of the dogs, for such a pair of jaws would have cut them in two at one snap. A hyena is never beautiful, and this one was simply hideous. Just for curiosity's sake I went to where he had been feeding on the remains of an eland cow, which I had driven to within one hundred yards of the camp two days previously, and I found he had cracked up the thigh bone just as if it had been gristle.

On examining the ground, I discovered that the lions had not approached any nearer than the ridge on which I had seen them. After having breakfasted, I returned again with the dogs and followed the spoor as far as the sand lasted; but, when the ground became rockier, I could no longer hold it, and the sun getting higher, burnt up all the scent, so that the dogs could make nothing of it, and I therefore reluctantly gave up further pursuit. Away to the East some antelope were visible, nearly against the bush belt lining the river, but as I had left

my glass in the waggon, I could not make out just what they were. I thought I would try and get one, however, in order to use it as a bait in a good position, considerably nearer the waggon, in hopes that the lion might return and give me a chance of a shot under more favourable conditions. So I went back for my horse, and leaving the dogs behind set out towards the herd which I had now made out to be hartebeeste. The shimmer of the heat on the veldt is most trying to the sight and often misleads even the experienced eye. Objects assume quite different aspects and colouring. It is a fact well known to hunters, but has no reference to "mirage." For instance, anyone would imagine that so brightly-marked an animal as the zebra would be always discernible on the sand; that the black stripes would be obvious. Nothing of the sort. It is at times almost impossible to distinguish this animal at all, even though you know for certain it is there, so cunningly does all merge itself into a whole.

Noting the exact location of the game, I judged that by careful manœuvring I might keep out of their line of vision, especially as the wind was in my favour. By threading in and out the clumps of thorns—not always an easy matter on horseback—I eventually got to

within a couple of hundred yards, and by a lucky shot bowled one over with a bullet through the neck, killing it instantly, and saving my horse the stiff gallop I had anticipated, for these creatures are as swift as any of the genus. Throwing the carcass just as it was, without opening, across the saddle, I took it to a spot which would give me a chance of a telling shot, if a lion should make its appearance. But although I watched the best part of the night, nothing came of my vigil, the jackals reaping the benefit of all my careful preparations. The fact was, as I subsequently found out, that they were lions in their prime, and it is not often that such can be decoyed by a carcass which they have not themselves destroyed. Fate, however, willed it that one of their number should contribute his share to my list of trophies, though it was not for some little time afterwards.

Next morning I was, of course, about, looking for signs; but could make nothing out as to lions. On going down towards the river some half-mile from camp, my attention was attracted by the unusual conduct of a leopard. He was cutting all sorts of capers; at one time ploughing along the ground with his head; at another rearing upright and tearing at his throat with

his forepaws. All this was curious, it was also my opportunity, and I lost no time in putting a couple of bullets into him, the second of which laid him out nicely, without giving me the trouble which usually falls to my lot when tackling these great cats. On proceeding to investigate the reason for such a strange performance, my wonder ceased. Having tackled a porcupine, with more gusto than discretion, one of the latter's quills had got inserted under the root of the leopard's tongue, and was working deeper and deeper. The torture the poor animal endured must have been awful, and I do not imagine it could have survived. No dead "Porky" appeared to be around, so, thanking him in his absence, I took the beautiful spotted skin. Next day I was laid up with an attack of fever which kept me idle for some time. My two boys, however, attended assiduously to my needs, and in due course I got about again. The lions had, during my sickness, once more appeared in the neighbourhood, and seemed to hang around indefinitely, but there being pretty well of game about they did not molest us in any way.

Well, I said that I got one of these lions after all, though he took quite a lot of getting, escaping me altogether on one occasion. I was not over strong bodily, but was pretty much

so in purpose, and it annoyed me to hear the roaring night after night and not render an account of it; then again our animals were getting almost beyond control, from the incessant tension on their nerves. Strolling away towards the hills one morning I came suddenly on a lion lying on a rock. His muzzle was stretched straight towards me, between his huge paws; his body, position, and surroundings adapting themselves so admirably to each other, that I was almost up to him before I was aware of his proximity. He was wide awake enough, however, and the instant he knew I had seen him, he started up and bounded away, giving me no time, in my nervous condition, to get a good shot. I fired, but as soon as I touched the trigger I knew I had missed him—perhaps it was all the better for me that I did so—and the next moment he was out of sight among the rocks.

Walking on a little farther, I came upon the half-consumed carcass of a hartebeeste, evidently killed the night before, the trail by which the lion had dragged it pointing towards the veldt. Here then was a chance too good to be lost; better than laying out shot game, though I must confess I would just as soon the spot had been a little nearer to the waggon, which was, in fact, more than a mile away. But I

made up my mind at once to take advantage of this piece of luck and return at dusk and lie up. Now, my experience goes to show that it is far too easy a matter to miss with a bullet in uncertain light, and that at short range buckshot is quite effective enough with most game. I therefore made several little paper shells to fit my ten-gauge gun, and, chambering the buckshot nicely therein, filled up the interstices with eland grease; no lion can withstand such a battery at a fair range, and your aim is much more likely to be accurate. Of course I took the carbine with 480 grain ball, and telling my boys to stay by the waggon,—for I could place no dependence upon either of them on such expeditions—evening found me duly esconced among some boulders this side the half eaten body, at a distance of about twenty paces, and looking directly towards the route taken by the lion when I had disturbed him in the morning. The carcass lay untouched, except that some albicores had pecked away at the eyes and nostrils; and I had carefully taken steps which should give me every available advantage with regard to wind, moon and position. So I insinuated myself as well as I could into a crevice between two boulders, and waited. It is with varied feelings one finds oneself so situated.

The utter stillness and vastness of everything contrast strongly with one's own insignificance.

For a couple of hours I had waited, occasionally changing position to ease the cramping of my limbs. "Everything comes to him who waits," and at last, over a rock beyond, appeared the lion, gradually rising into full view. In the dim light he appeared monstrous as he stood, chest full on; and then, as he gave vent to a sonorous roar, which echoed and re-echoed from rock to rock, the effect was grand, and beyond any power of expression. It is under such circumstances as these that you see the lion at his best. Night-time is his day, and in the sunlight he is more or less at a disadvantage. He must have stood a full minute like this; a sore temptation to me to fire, and I believe I should have killed him stone dead had I done so. Having apparently satisfied himself that things were all right, he walked leisurely down to his prey, and again uttering a roar, stood facing me. This time I did not hesitate, but pulling both barrels nearly simultaneously, put both charges into his chest, and the lion fell forward almost without a sound. For a few moments he lay absolutely motionless; then some convulsive movements of the hinder limbs, and all was still, as it had been before he made his appearance.

IX.

HOW I SHOT MY RHINOCEROSES.

The white, or square-nosed rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros simus*), formerly so plentiful, has been practically exterminated south of the Zambesi, unless it may be sparingly found in some isolated tracts in the south-east. The black species, too, has been so harrassed that it may be considered rare in South Africa proper. Nowadays it is generally the countries dubbed "best hunting" which get the onslaught of the sportsman, whilst others are passed over because the probabilities of a large bag are small. So much the better for the naturalist, who then has an opportunity of studying the habits of the fauna under less trying conditions than that of catching a glimpse of an animal in the distance and then having to gallop it down. Of course, it is an acknowledged fact that many of the *Ungulata*, without being strictly migratory, are plentiful in a district for a time, and then may not be met with again for months or even years, when they reappear in large numbers. Take the elephant, for instance; the eland also travels long distances for change of, or for favourite food. So also with the rhinoceros.

They may be to all intents and purposes wiped out of existence, but in consequence of having been left alone for years, they have been found once more in their old haunts. Anyway I got a couple of rhinoceroses where I had never anticipated meeting with any; I also know that these were not the only ones.

I was returning to the waggon with a magnificent bustard (*Otis Kori*), almost as large as an ostrich, slung across my saddle, when I struck, much to my astonishment, rhinoceros spoor. Halting, I satisfied myself as to its freshness; also that there were two of them; and as there were always bushmen hovering around the camp on the chance of any stray morsels, I made up my mind to have a hunt, which I should not otherwise have done. Hastening back I hung my bustard in a thorn tree, and getting a mouthful myself and letting my horse get a bite or two and a drink, just to freshen him without endangering his wind, I started back to where I had first seen the spoor of the rhinoceros, and took it up. Both animals had been to the river to drink, and had there been a moon I should have lain up on the chance of their returning that night. This was, however, impracticable; neither was there any certainty that they would return, as there were plenty

of other places where they could drink equally well. I rode on for several miles, the bush all along being sparsely herbaged, open bits of flat alternating with small clumps of thorns. Three koodoos I surprised, two cows and a young bull, whose small horns, however, were not of sufficient inducement to make me risk alarming the larger game by a shot, although they turned and stared at me in a tantalising manner, and my horse champed and pawed the sand in expectation, wondering why I did not allow him to start in pursuit. On I went for another mile or more, when the traces of the rhinoceroses became plainer; the boughs were pulled and browsed, and the dung had been dropped within the hour. This made me brace up in the expectation of coming up with them at any moment, as when they commence feeding they travel very leisurely.

I had not ridden many yards further before I sighted the two great animals, busy munching the shoots of some bushes. I had gone up wind, of course; to have done otherwise would have been useless, and my approach had been facilitated by their doing likewise. Although they would have scented me long before, they are not quick-sighted at a distance. But their hearing is as acute as their sense of smell, so I proceeded as cautiously as ever, going down

nearer to the river in order to get the wind a point or two more in my favour, and working from clump to clump of thorn bushes as opportunity served, in this manner getting into a bit of bush about twenty paces from where the rhinoceroses were feeding. Here, however, their keen sense of hearing soon discovered something, and they ceased eating, looking wistfully in every direction with their little twinkling eyes. The weapon I was using was a 10-bore muzzle-loader, for which I had given a £10 note at Vaughan's in the Strand. This rifle had great smashing power, and as a killer would compare favourably with elaborate modern weapons. When a rhinoceros does charge he is by no means particular at what, being so near-sighted that the most conspicuous object gets the onslaught. At the same time I must say they are usually most inoffensive animals, and even when wounded will, as a rule, get out of the way if they can.

One would imagine that with a huge beast like this it would be very easy to plant a bullet in a manner sure to be effective. This is by no means the case, and it took consideration before I settled on the exact spot at which to fire. The brain-pan is so small, and the amount of bone surrounding it so great, that, unless

A Charging Rhinoceros.—*Chapter xi.*

from very near, it is a dangerous shot to give, and a good knowledge of the creature's anatomy is necessary. Half-way down the neck, to catch the vertebræ, is a good place if you can make sure of hitting. But through the lungs is the shot *par excellence*, and has the advantage of offering a larger surface. I myself prefer this shot to almost any other, and at any game, and I think a great many other hunters do so, too. So taking a steady aim at the back of the shoulder of the nearer rhinoceros I fired, and the great beast lurched over against his companion, both nearly coming to the ground. He, however, recovered himself and scampered after his fellow, but came to a stop after going three or four hundred yards, evidently labouring heavily for breath. After reloading, I followed, and as I approached he half raised his head and then with an angry grunt made a groggy charge, which I had little difficulty in avoiding, although my horse was very restive, having, at any rate since he had been in my possession, never seen such an animal. The rhinoceros, on missing me, came gradually to a stand, and turned again, but he was bleeding freely both from the wound and from his nostrils; and but for putting him out of his misery, or possibly averting an accident, I had half a mind to let him

die as he stood. I wished afterwards that I had done this and saved a good deal of trouble. But instead, I gave him another shot, on receiving which he immediately set off at such a gallop and at so quick a pace that I found it difficult to keep near him. Right ahead he went as if he were blind, through brush and open just the same; but whilst his heavy carcass crashed through everything as if there were nothing to impede him, it completely threw me out. He made straight down to the river, and I managed to catch a glimpse of him now and again, until he got to the thicker belt of timber running immediately alongside it; I thought I heard the plunge he made into the water, too.

Soon I managed to reach the river-side, and, fastening my horse to a tree, walked down till I found the spot where the rhinoceros had struck the water. I could, however, see nothing of him, and came to the conclusion that he must have swum across to the opposite side, or else died and sunk to the bottom. From the disturbed and bloody state of the water, together with the bubbles continually rising, I was pretty certain that he had gone down; and, as these signs soon disappeared, leaving the surface as unruffled as usual, there was nothing else to do but to allow time for the rising of the carcass. I had

never seen or heard of a rhinoceros dying in this way, but hippopotami always sink when killed in the water, remaining below for many hours, according to whether they be in a fat or lean condition. As I did not imagine he would float before three or four hours at least had elapsed, I rode back for assistance. On the way I met some bushmen, who had got wind of my doings, and I told them to go and watch for the rising of the body and that they could have the meat, but were to leave the horns untouched and I would chop them out myself. I returned to the waggon and sent Bob after them to see that my instructions were carried out, and then, after some slight refreshment, I went to the spot where I had first met with the rhinoceroses, to see if I could not take up the spoor of the one which had got away.

After following for a couple of miles, the bush became thicker, and I half wished I had come on foot, for I dared not leave my horse fastened up for long, out of sight, or would have dismounted and gone on by myself. I therefore proceeded as well as I could, and under no slight difficulties. I don't think we could possibly have got through, but that the rhinoceros had opened up a kind of lane by smashing everything before him. Glad I was when the bush became less

dense; he had halted on reaching the open, and had torn up the ground with his horn for several yards around and then gone on at a walk. So I cautiously reconnoitred. Just at this moment three koodoo bulls dashed past a little ahead of me, but they gave me no chance of a shot, even if I had not now made up my mind to possess the fine horns of the rhinoceros, the anterior one of which looked to be almost two feet in length, whilst the other did not appear so very much shorter, which is unusual. I now caught sight of him, rather to my astonishment, as I did not expect, after the koodoos galloping past, to have seen him just yet. He was standing under a thorn bush, almost hidden from me by thick brush. His small ears were flapping, and I could see his head was held on one side in an attitude of attention. Before, when I had come upon them, I had not noticed the *Buphagas* or rhinoceros-birds, though doubtless they were in attendance; but now several of these birds, reminding one somewhat of the missel thrush of England, were vociferating around and endeavouring to bring their huge companion to a sense of his danger. For some reason he did not take any notice. I suppose they must have followed him overhead, for I don't see how they could have done so through the undergrowth.

Feeling my chances of a shot depended on my looking sharp, I trotted quickly up to where he was standing and fired as soon as I could get a sight at his shoulder. With a snort he rushed forward a few yards, and stood, looking spitefully from side to side. I could feel my horse trembling between my knees, but he did not otherwise move, and I suppose my background of brush prevented the rhinoceros from catching a definite sight of us in his confused state. I therefore let him have the other barrel, and he fell forward, getting up again immediately, however, and coming straight on at me like a battering ram. My gun was now empty and my horse became very unruly; but I evaded his rush and galloped across to the other cover as the rhinoceros crashed headlong into that I had left. Once out of sight I loaded as quickly as possible, putting two bullets into my left barrel. I was debating how to act next, for I could hear my friend rampaging around in the thicket, when he suddenly emerged, looking, however, very sick; and, after standing staring about him for a few minutes, he quietly lay down. This was rather perplexing. It might probably mean that he was done. But I was not by any means certain about the accuracy of my two shots, for they had been fired from the back of a restive

horse. Besides, his ears kept flapping, as if his senses were still on the alert.

I was much too far away for firing safely, so I got my horse in hand and started towards him again. As I had half anticipated, up he got, as nimbly as if his vast body were no weight to speak of, and, with a vicious shake of his head, came charging at us once more. I had, however, got my horse more under command, and, wheeling just in time, I gave him the double bullet charge at close quarters as he passed me, this time catching him in the right place, rolling him over in such a manner that he was past returning to the attack. He was, however, not yet dead; and I was compelled to put him out of his misery with a ball through the brain. I measured his horns with my little tape, and found the longer one to be twenty inches in length round the curve, and the posterior one seventeen and a half inches. The longest black rhinoceros horn I had seen before had a length of twenty-five inches. The so-called white species, of course, carried much longer nasal apendages, from three to four feet being sometimes recorded, and even longer. There was nothing now to do but to leave him as he lay until next day, so I took the back trail down to the river, where I found the

bushmen had already dragged the rhinoceros on to the shelving bank and were busy to their hearts' content. I now set to work and chopped out the horns. They were, however, considerably less than those of the one I had just killed, it being a younger bull and a smaller animal altogether. Taking one thing with another, this had been a tolerably stiff day's work, and I was not sorry to get back again to the waggon, and, after a hearty meal of koodoo steak, to seek my blanket, to dream of charging rhinoceroses and sundry exciting incidents, more imaginary than real, such as too hearty application to rather heavy nutriment would be apt to induce when taken just before turning in. Then, again, I wanted to be about at first dawn, to attend to the skin of the bustard, which really ought to have been seen to there and then.

X.

SHOOTING HIPPOPOTAMI ON THE LIMPOPO RIVER.

Although it would scarcely be expected, there is no considerable risk attached to the hunting of the hippopotami; and, inoffensive as they unquestionably are by nature, I have seen them when their fury has been as violent as that of any other game. Their great strength, with the natural protection afforded by their amphibious habits, enabled them to hold their own pretty well, in spite of the harpoon and spear, until the rifle of the hunter appeared on the scene. Now, the advent of the white man to regions frequented by hippopotami means entreaties for their slaughter, and wholesale butchery is the result. Of course the teeth are valuable, but there is so little of them that it is hardly worth while shooting them for these alone. At all events such is my experience. Although lacking the, to me, ordinary attractions attached to the hunting of big game, perhaps a few incidents relating to the chase of these great pachyderms may not be uninteresting to some of my readers. I was in no sort of trim to engage in any exciting sport, having

barely recovered from a sharp attack of fever, brought on no doubt by my persistently camping near the rivers, which I had been doing unceasingly for many months. But when it could be kept, the attraction of the waterway had always been too great for me. I was reclining in the waggon, my thoughts wandering far across land and sea to scenes of long ago, for I was alone and felt too listless to go out for mere exercise or sport, the boys having gone out to try to get something in the way of fresh venison, when a party of natives came along and begged us to go and kill them some meat. They informed me there was a herd of ten sea-cows beyond the bend in the river. Their emaciated forms and protruding joints were sufficient arguments in their favour, poor wretches, though, personally, in my then frame of mind, I would have preferred that there had been no hippopotami nearer than the mouth of the Zambesi. I promised them I would do what I could as soon as the boys got back, when we would inspan and trek on nearer to where the animals were.

I knew that they would not go very far, even if disturbed by my Kaffirs' shooting, for they seldom leave the vicinity of the water. As many more of my readers will have seen the track of the badger than of a hippo-

potamus, the former will on a small scale give them an idea of what the spoor left by these huge animals is like. When moving to and fro from the riverside they usually follow in single file, and as they use the same trail over and over again it takes the appearance of two large furrows with a ridge in the centre, the top of which is often made quite smooth by the rubbing of their bellies. We had trekked on again and outspanned, and made all tolerably snug before turning in for the night, the boys having brought in a bush pig which they had run to ground and eventually succeeding in killing, this only after a rather savage resistance on the part of the boar, which left an ugly gash in the calf of Bob's leg. I put a couple of stitches in it for him, and it soon got all right again, with no other lotion than one of weak carbolic acid and water. We had some roast pork for supper, which was a great treat after the everlasting venison. When I had a dog I frequently used to get guinea fowls, but now, although there are plenty in the bush, and their call is continually heard, it is by the greatest chance I ever get one. They run, and run, and run. There is no getting them up, and as they will not take to the open, I now leave them alone. After cutting some choice bits from our pig, we

passed over the remainder to our attentive retinue, which in an incredibly short space of time improved away every vestige of the remnants, as thoroughly as if a pack of jackals had been there. I did not feel very much inclined to turn out the next morning, but a good dose of quinine, and a nice lean pork chop, soon put a little fresh vigour into my sadly shaky frame. As soon as the sun had somewhat dispelled the mist overhanging the river, I took my 10-bore double-muzzle loader, and Bob, who could not be persuaded to stay and mind the oxen and so rest his wounded leg a bit, carried my Martini-Henry carbine for long distance or very accurate firing. Canoes or anything in the way of water transport we had none. To tell the truth, I did not care to run the risk of being swamped by a furious hippo, and should not have hunted from the water if there had been any. Crocodiles are always more or less numerous and equally voracious, and altogether it is far more satisfactory to hunt from *terra firma*.

On rounding the bend of the river a remarkable sight met our gaze. We could count eight of these ponderous animals, in various positions. Some were knee deep in water, others were only visible so far as their nostrils and eyes and

a portion of their backs were concerned, the rest of their bodies being submerged. Now and then one would disappear altogether, so that it was impossible to tell exactly how many there were. From the kloof along which we had scrambled I got a good view of the whole of the river reach, extending as it did for miles; here, with bush almost to the water's edge; there, flat and sandy, the white sand reminding me much of that in the valley of the Rhine at Ragatz, before reaching Pfeffers and the Tamina; whilst just about where the hippopotami were disporting themselves it was, on the opposite side, rocky and well timbered. So far, they had not taken the alarm, but it would not do to proceed any farther as we were then doing. I accordingly turned my back on the river and proceeded up the kloof, calculating it so that by describing a semi-circle, I should come out somewhere near the spot I was making for. There was not a *soupçon* of air, which was all well and good, but the heat was intense, and I suppose I noticed it more than I should have ordinarily done. Anyway I felt I must take a rest, considerably to the disgust of my hangers-on, who to all appearance had forgotten all about their recent feast.

After lying down for an hour, we again set

out, but the bush was so thick that progress was not very rapid. Now and again we could hear a hippopotamus blow, and this helped to keep us in the right direction; gradually the blowing and kindred sounds became plainer and yet more distinct, and at length the sunlight I had been looking for burst through, showing that the river was now close at hand;—in another minute more I was lying at full length, looking down upon what, see it when you may, must always be an extraordinary scene. The huge beasts had not changed their positions much, except that they were now all in the water, and it was difficult to single out an individual with a view to extra fatness. There were now, too, a couple of little calves, which I had not previously observed, and I should have been sorry to have killed their mothers. None of the animals appeared to take the slightest notice, although they must have heard the jabbering behind me, which I could not stop. I thought I had better take a shot at one anyway, lest they should take it into their heads to sink and go down the river to a spot less accessible. I therefore singled out one, which from its being farthest from the calves would be least likely to belong to either of them. I saw the bullet smash on to the skull between the

eye and ear as plainly as possible, and in another instant there was not a sign of a sea-cow, except where the ripples on the surface of the water showed where they had vanished. After some minutes a head would reappear, then another, and so on, alternately rising and sinking and occasionally remaining a while on the top of the water, evidently not as yet realising the extent of the danger. One hippo, however, inadvertently swam over the spot where I had fired at the first, which was quite a little distance up stream from the others, or else the tainted water must have floated down towards her. Anyhow, she blew and snorted violently and made a great commotion before going down, evidently both terrified and enraged at the smell of the blood of her companions. As she went down with a splash, every other head disappeared as if by preconcerted signal, and I began to see that if I meant to kill another one in this pool I must do so without further delay, for they were gradually drifting down to the tail end, whence they would soon get into the stream again and go, I knew not how far.

My first hippo had not come up again, so I concluded she was dead and would not show for some hours. I fired at the head of another, but missed, for I saw the ball strike the water

just beyond, and before I could get the other barrel off there was nothing to aim at. I thought I would try the carbine now, for the nearest cow which rose was as far away as the one at which I had first fired. I turned and asked whether the one I had already killed would not be sufficient, but the clamour was for at least one more; so watching carefully for the next rise, which luckily was a head directly towards me and about fifty yards distant, and taking as fine a sight as I possibly could, I let fly at the expanded nostril, and must have sent the bullet clean into it, for nothing much else was visible, and the water did not show the splash as the snout disappeared. I now determinedly refused to hunt any more, unless we came across the old bull belonging to the herd, which had not shown up and which perhaps I might kill for his tusks. I had no further doubt of the two sea-cows being dead, and I wanted the bushmen to return with me and finish making the skerm. They would not, however, be induced to leave the neighbourhood of the pool, but promised to come after they had secured the carcasses, when they floated. This had to suffice, though I knew very well there would be small chance of seeing them until they had gorged themselves to repletion and slept a good deal of it off afterwards.

I therefore returned along the river-side to the camp, which was not very far this way, and when about half-way back a fine koodoo bull jumped up from almost under my very feet. I bowled him over with a shot in the ribs from my 10-bore, which I had carried on the chance of pctting a crocodile. As I ran up to him he got on his feet again, and, rising on his hind legs, struck furiously at me with his forehoofs like lightning. I had not been prepared for this action on his part, others of the antelopes—and they are often dangerous when wounded—having always come on with their horns.

Immediately on firing I had exchanged with Bob for the lighter weapon, and as the bull raised himself I sent a ball into his chest, not in time, however, to prevent him giving me a violent blow on the breast before I could parry him. With the other hoof he caught the side of my neck, and this last might have settled me had it gone a little deeper, for the edges of their hoofs are like knives, and these animals are as active and sure-footed on rocky ground as a chamois. I was once nearly knocked over a precipice by an infuriated ibex, and the incident came vividly to my recollection whilst boxing with this koodoo, under such strangely different circumstances. I reeled back and he

passed me, disappearing into the bush behind. The blood was trickling down my neck very uncomfortably, but taking the German silver cap off my little filter, which was always kept as bright as a looking-glass, I could see that it was only a flesh wound, so I mopped and bound it up as well as I could *pro. tem.*, and took up the red-hot spoor of the bull. He had effectually dispelled my previous lethargy, and made me feel as if I had been having a rather stiff bout with the gloves; and I am afraid, just at the moment, I thought less about his lovely head and skin than my desire for revenge, quite forgetting that I had been the aggressor in the first instance. I soon came up with him, lying quite dead. The marvel was, that he could have sufficiently recovered from the shock of the first heavy bullet to fight as he did. It was a dreadful wound, because given at such close quarters, though the smaller one had been the immediate cause of death, the ball having, as I subsequently found, completely traversed the heart. Even then, he had gone at least a couple of hundred yards before he fell, furnishing only another instance of the great tenacity of life in the antelope tribe. In all probability a lion would have given very little trouble after the first shot. Ten to one he would have dropped

in his tracks at the second. All the same, I must candidly admit I am just as glad it was not a lion that had to receive the latter.

I now hurried back to the waggon to attend to myself, and on reaching it sent Bob back with the horse to fetch the koodoo as speedily as possible. I did not wish to risk having his head damaged, and it is wonderful what a lot of harm even ants will do in a very short time. Next morning I felt rather stiff, but I went down to the river to see if I could find the old bull hippopotamus, for I naturally concluded there must be a lord and master somewhere among such a lot of females. I passed the natives, who were holding high carnival over their sea-cows, the carcasses of which they had securely moored to the bank with lianas. I told them I must have the tusks, also that I wanted some of the fat to render down. All the rest they could have, and if I managed to kill the old bull he was theirs too. I saw no signs of the hippos of the day before until I got at least three miles beyond the pool. Here they had evidently spent the night on the bank; I presumed that the offal, or rather the taint of it, had charged the water. This must really have been the case, for on rounding another bend in the river I again came upon the herd

standing close to the stream, but none of them in it, and looking as if they were undecided whether to enter it or not. The bull was with them this time, in anything but a good humour apparently. I noticed him go to the edge of the water more than once and as often back out again, snorting and stamping his foot. In the meantime I had come considerably nearer, for their attention seemed engrossed by the water. When I had approached as close as I deemed prudent, I got a good sight at the old fellow's head, just between the eye and the ear, and where I knew the brain must lie, and let him have it The report decided them, and one and all plunged headlong in. I felt, however, quite certain that my bullet had gone true, so I sat down for a time and watched the heads disappear until all were lost to view, and then, satisfied that my friend would quietly repose at the bottom for the allotted time, I made my way to the waggons.

XI.

ONCE MORE IN THE ROCKIES.

Our camp was up towards the headwaters of the Bighorn River, just where Owl Creek runs into it—an ideal spot for a shanty and in every way adapted to a hunter's requirements. We were out on business—trapping for what our furs would bring us—not merely a pleasure-party. Under such circumstances, a bear's hide helps to "tote" up the balance, and there was plenty of such game in the mountains. "Old Ephraim" ranged here where he pleased—the giant grizzly of the Rockies—about which such thrilling stories have been written, some of them probably rather too highly coloured. It is the fashion nowadays to accept with incredulity much that travellers and sportsmen write, and to consider it a hunter's privilege to draw the long bow. I do not pretend to deny that some do embellish their narratives, so as to make them savour of the miraculous; but those who have themselves hunted, and who know, can always discern between truth and fiction, even where the truth looks, for ordinary mortals, almost beyond belief.

That "the lion is the king of beasts," seems to us from infancy to be "Q.E.D.", but the lion cannot be compared to the grizzly bear, either as to courage, or tenacity of life. A full-grown grizzly is more than four times as heavy as the finest lion that ever stepped the veldt; and where a lion will more often than not endeavour to escape, who ever heard of a grizzly acting likewise?—I mean if once molested. But in spite of what I have said, I respect a lion; indeed, I ought to do so. Of late years the grizzly, in common with other animals, has "tumbled to" the increased efficacy of modern firearms; but it is a respect which demands reciprocity. Hunter and bear agree pretty well nowadays so long as both go their respective ways. The hunter provides the bear with sundry meals, and in return he is permitted to enjoy himself on Ephraim's preserves. Once molest him, however, and there is sure to be trouble.

I must, however, return to Owl Creek, where Gerard, Fawcett and I were hunting and trapping generally. One morning we were all busily engaged in chopping wood. It was before the days of the cross-cut saw—such a thing was expensive, indeed a rarity in the woods, and every tree had to be felled and chopped up.

the delirious pleasure of which work can only be duly appreciated by those who have tried it. I was anathematising the bluntness of my axe and the necessity of laying in a supply of firing, when a prolonged whistle from Gerard made us both look up; and following the direction of his gaze, there stood a huge grizzly in the swamp, some eighty rods (four hundred yards) from our bit of clearing. Snow had not yet fallen where we were camped; although on the foot-hills there was plenty; and the bear was engaged in munching up what cranberries remained, for even the carnivorous grizzly enjoys such dainties at times. In fact, where the wild plums grow he will tear down trees to get at the fruit. He had not appeared to pay any attention to the sound of our axes, thinking us beneath notice, or, what is more probable, he was not hungry. But when we left our chopping, he looked up and then raised himself on his hind legs, as though better to take in our position. "Say; but he has an elegant hide," was Fawcett's remark, which I cut short by bidding him hold his tongue, or that his own hide might become "elegantly" scored. What to do, was the next thing. In the meantime the bear had resumed his normal gait, and had disappeared into the timber, at

the edge of the marsh, through which the creek made a bend.

Thinking that in all probability he would not cross the stream, but follow it up towards the mountains, we hastily arranged that I should start on his trail, which was easy enough to hold, even through the leaves; whilst Gerard was to cut across some distance to the west and head him off. Fawcett, who was never really sure whether he would get "ague" or not, even if he came across a fawn, I advised either to stay in camp or else keep some little distance behind me, for in this sort of hunting you certainly carry your life in your hands as much as it is possible to do when coping with a wild animal, and the utmost *sangfroid* is necessary.

I still used the converted Enfield carbine, which required capping, though a breech-loader; and also had a heavy bulldog six-shooter which took a ball not much less in calibre than that of my military piece. I had not followed our bear far, before a young buck came tearing back on a runaway which crossed the trail I was taking. He went by me like a streak; and what with the fright he had evidently received before I added to his terror, he looked a well-scared deer. Of course, I took no notice of him, but kept carefully on, expecting every moment to

come up with the bear. Down at the creek he had gone out on to the shallow, but had returned without crossing, and kept on in the direction of the Shoshone Mountains, where the creek has its source, together with several others, the Gooseberry, Greybull, etc. I always endeavour to camp in the neighbourhood of creeks, on account of the mink, which, taken on the whole, is one of the best paying furs the trapper gets.

I was wondering how far west Gerard had gone and was looking for the bark of his old shooting iron every minute, when getting over a big cedar which lay directly in my path and from the upturned roots of which I was just about to jump, I almost precipitated myself on to the bear! I could only hold on to one of the limbs for all I knew, and just manage to swing myself round into a sitting posture on the log. It was a near shave; but it served me right for being so hasty; "step once, look twice," the Indians say. Down beneath me in the moss was the grizzly, and he was not slow to resent the intrusion. The stump I was perched on was shockingly bad foothold, but as the bear rose on his hind legs and endeavoured to scramble up, I gave him a ball in the chest, for I thought myself too low to fire at his head with certainty. The limb he had got hold of gave way at the

same time, and he went to the ground again. Instantly reloading, I was lucky enough to get a cap on in time, for he was up and at me in a bigger fury than ever. I don't believe I shall ever forget the expression of that particular bear; he was so close to me. I certainly had little opportunity for making observations, for the huge jaws all sputtering with blood and foam were within a few feet of me. I lost no time in giving him another bullet, but although I knew it had gone true he took about as much notice of it as he would of a saloon pistol. As I leaped back I caught sight of Gerard coming up in the distance, and I knew he had taken in the situation. The bear had reached my vacated position, and I may be thankful that I was light—compared with my huge antagonist. By jumping from one fallen log to another, I managed to keep afoot; whereas the bear crashed through everything like so much matchwood, and you may imagine I led into the places most likely to bother him. Gerard had now come up, and given him the contents of his gun without any apparent effect. I had no chance to reload; it was as much as I could do to keep my feet, not always that; but I kept on letting him have the contents of my revolver, which from any impression it appeared to make upon

him, I might just as well have left alone, unless indeed it was to make him more furious. All at once he came to a stand; and as he seemed to pause, I also halted, loading as I did so with all speed. He appeared to be sinking down, at least I thought so, as I fired at his eye, Gerard plugging him at the same moment. At the shots he collapsed entirely, and the huge creature which but a minute before had been "raising tarnation" all around, settled down as gently as if he had been going to sleep. I had of course loaded again, but shooting was unnecessary as far as he was concerned. We both got up together, Gerard and I, to find that my last shot had struck him full in the eye, as was intended.

It had been a pretty lively dance, and it was only the nature of the ground, which was all cedar swamp, that saved me. The immense weight of the bear, something like fifteen hundred pounds, made it impossible for him to get through the soft places without getting quagmired, whereas I could run along the logs without breaking through. As it was I was all torn up as far as clothing went. Fawcett now came along, and all three sat down on the bear. After having rested a bit, the lot of us soon got the skin off and we were able to see how

much cold lead a grizzly bear accommodates before he is finished. I saw that there was one cartridge left in my six-shooter; candidly I had not been able to keep count of the number of times I had fired, although I knew I had fired three times out of my carbine. Well, we found that every shot fired had taken effect some way or other, ten altogether, and all except Gerard's two, which were buried in his back, at very short range. My 545-calibre were distributed about his chest and neck and deep enough too; and besides the brain shot, my two heavy army bullets were embodied in his lungs. As he lay there, before we skinned him, he looked the grand old fellow he was. You may take it that if you have anything to do with a grizzly, you will have all your work cut out. He never turns tail, and dies game under all circumstances; nor will you ever hear a word but one of respect for his fighting qualities, if you ask the opinion of every hunter in the Rocky Mountains.

Naturally, situated as we were, all sorts of incidents occurred which might be more or less interesting to relate. One day I had a rather rougher scrimmage than usual with a bull elk. By elk, I mean wapiti, not moose, as the European nomenclature might imply. The wapiti, in its own haunts, is elk, and that only with

white men. On the particular morning to which I refer, we were after meat. In the fall, when it is often very hot and the blowflies are about, it is necessary to jerk the venison or it will spoil in a short time; so you must, if you want it for a supply next year, which we did not. But as soon as cold weather sets in, there is no necessity for any such trouble, and we could keep all the meat wanted for our stay in camp, frozen, and we should probably remain until well on into April, when the fur would lose its value. Having plenty of meat did not mean that we could not kill a buck if we felt so disposed; but it did mean that we should be enabled to devote the whole of our time to the purpose for which we had come there, *viz.*, trapping and hunting fur-bearing animals.

A good tracking snow had fallen during the night, and we all set out in different directions. I myself had not gone very far before I came across the tracks of a band of elk. It was the first snow of the season where we were, and was about two inches in depth; but it had cleared up. In fact, when I peeped out at one o'clock in the morning, to see how the weather looked, the stars were shining brightly, and as the morning broke clear, we did not anticipate any more snow, at any rate before we should get back

again to camp. The tracks led down towards the cedar swamp where we had killed the grizzly bear, before mentioned, a week or two previously, and then skirting it, sheered off into the timber through the hemlock to the beech and maple ridges, where I expected I should come across fresher signs, for those I was following had been made early in the night. Sure enough, they had been scratching for "shack" all over the place; a black bear had also been found. But venison was the order of the day, and I kept on after my elk. I knew that a little further ahead the shintangle (dwarf hemlock) was very luxuriant, and that in all probability they would be found lying down there, as is their habit, from daylight to noon, when they again feed for a short time.

Carefully worming my way up towards an uprooted tree, I was nearly there when the old bull of the band began to whistle. Redoubling my caution, I kept on till I was up to it, and, peering over the ridge, I could see that the heads were not in my direction at all, and that something else must have given them the alarm. I saw what it was at once. Skulking along the opposite ridge was a mountain lion; no doubt he had been attracted by the smell of venison, but had thought it prudent to retire, as the old bull elk snorted defiantly and stamped with his

foot till the pounding sounded again, even through the deadening snow. I felt myself in a kind of quandary, I must confess. His splendid head and level tines were a sore temptation; but we did not want to have to chew old bull elk, and I knew I should be well scolded if I supplied the mess with such an article. So I sighted carefully at one of the sleekest looking of the cows and let fly, sinking instantly into my hemlock cover as I did so. Raising myself cautiously a moment or so afterwards, I saw that the main bunch had not changed position; but the cow at which I had fired jumped some twenty yards ahead and stood looking in my direction, or rather that of the smoke of my carbine which had floated some way off to my right—as did all the rest. I could see also that blood was pouring fast from her throat; in fact she had hard work to keep on her feet, and in a moment or two she tottered from side to side and sank down. I was so buried in the shintangle that even their acute senses had not yet made me out.

Having got a cartridge in, I sighted on another cow, and as I fired she broke away with a plunge, followed by all the others. As they came near the dead cow, they veered off towards me, the old bull snorting wildly. The line they took was pretty open, and after going about a hundred yards

the wounded cow went over on her head whilst the remainder pulled up. They were about as far to my left as they had previously been to my right, and distant perhaps seventy yards. I now thought, as two fat cows lay all ready for camp, I could conscientiously have a try for the coveted head; so taking steady aim, I had the satisfaction of seeing him drop on his knees. Ramming in another cartridge with all speed, I got a second shot at him, just as he regained his feet; but I knew I had missed the moment I fired. I also knew that he was coming at me like a battering ram, and I had barely time to dodge behind my friendly stump, before he was on to me, or rather it, with a crash. I thought he must have dislocated his neck anyway, but elks' necks are not so easily broken. All the same he must have been partially stunned by the concussion, and I thereby had—luckily—time to reload before he got disentangled. Had the stump been sound, he would have been fast there, but it was partially rotten, and his great strength enabled him to plough away the clipping tines, which had been sufficiently pliable to clinch around, leaving deep furrows as he did so. I could easily have cut his throat had he been really fast, but his eye looked too ominous, and I kept a discreet distance. I knew now

that calmness must be to the fore, that the least *faux pas* meant death to me. Although I knew he was a practically dead bull and could not survive many minutes, even as he was, that would be small consolation to me, should I have to precede him on the last trip. As he shook himself free, he came for me once more, but I was again behind the stump, and as he had rushed back a few yards before charging, I planted a ball between his eyes, and all was over.

I had some little fun with Gerard when I told him a big old bull elk lay waiting to be toted in, and he expressed himself in a decided manner upon my conduct, until, when he came upon the scene, he saw the two young cows; then he altered his tone and became the joyous gay old chap he always was.

XII.

GIRAFFE HUNTING.

THE experience of a hundred years—the giraffe was practically rediscovered for Europeans rather more than a century since—has shewn that giraffes can only be successfully hunted on horseback. An odd one may with infinite care and precaution be stalked on foot now and again, but it may be laid down as a sound axiom in African hunting that the sportsman requires a horse—and a pretty good one—to enable him to achieve the downfall of the camelopard. There are many delights in hunting, especially in African hunting; but the first run up to a troop of giraffes may be accounted one of the rarest and keenest pleasures that a man can ever hope to enjoy.

Far up country in South Africa, in the wild western portion of Khama's Country—Bamangwato—stand two hunting waggons, outspanned by a foul and scanty pool of water. It is pale dawn, and the desert air is chill, but already the camp is stirring, for "camel" are to be hunted to-day. The Boers, as soon as they became acquainted with the tall giraffe, forthwith

dubbed it in their quaint way "Kameel"—the camel,—and as "camel" the giraffe is still known throughout the length and breadth of the South African hunting veldt.

A hasty breakfast is swallowed by the owners of the waggons, two Englishmen; their spurs are buckled on, the rifles got down from their waggon hooks, and cartridge-belts fastened across the flannel shirts. The giraffe in his native haunts, where his colouring is strangely protective, takes a deal of finding. Even the bushman is deceived by the play of light and shade, and the resemblance of the great creature's dappled hide to its surroundings, as it stands, half hidden and utterly motionless, in the dun forest; and the two white men, as you may see, each carry, slung over their backs, a light field-glass. A rifle, a water-bottle fastened to the saddle, a short *sjambok* (colonial whip) of giraffe hide, attached to the rider's wrist, and a few biscuits, complete the equipment. There are six men of the party, the two Englishmen, a mounted Bamangwato hunter, who accompanies them to direct the spoorers and translate, and three desert-bred Masarwa bushmen. These latter are to conduct the spooring operations, and no better men shall you find for the task the world over. It must be a marvellous beast.

indeed, whose scantiest footprint and its story shall escape the keen eyes and instincts of these desert children. Five feet four or five inches in height, lean, thin-legged, and with no great muscular development, these Masarwas look this morning as keen as hawks. Already they scent flesh upon the air; they are good sportsmen to boot, and although they themselves wield no heavier weapon than the spear, tiny bow, and poisoned arrows of their forefathers, they love, beyond all things, to show the white man sport, and to see him gallop and shoot down his game; for it means much flesh and many banquets to them and theirs. Each of these bushmen carries his native hatchet, assegai and skin cloak; one of them carries, as well, a calabash of water; and, as a point of honour always observed in the veldt, each of them further insists upon bearing the rifle of the mounted hunter to whom he attaches himself.

Just as the sun's ruddy streamers flash into the pale green sky of sunrise, the party quits the waggons, and strikes into the flat and trackless desert. For three hours the bushmen walk at a brisk pace steadily in front of the horsemen. The sun, once risen, quickly asserts his powers, and the veldt grows hot. The Masarwas pull off their tiny skin cloaks, and

fold them round the assegais which they carry on their shoulders. They are now mother naked, save for the patch of hide about their middles. Sometimes the hunters traverse thickish bush, where, strangely enough, even in these waterless wastes, and in time of winter, some lilac flowers may be seen decking thickets of a leguminous growth. Now and again a great treeless flat is crossed. Everywhere the desert is carpeted with long grass of a pale yellow—that prevailing hue of South African up-country winter of which the eye grows so infinitely weary. The shrivelled leafage of the mopani trees, so often passed, is a pale rufous brown; only the dark green foliage of the giraffe acacias gives relief to the eye. As a flat is crossed a little whirlwind, eddying up from the veldt in a pillar of dust, can be seen. These isolated whirlwinds, which occur in the calmest weather, are a curious feature of this immense desert land, and seem to be attributable to the extreme flatness of the country. Here and there a *steinbok* or *duyker*—small antelopes, capable of existing for long periods without water—starts up in the bush or grass; sometimes a brace of sand-grouse, busily feeding among the desert seeds, fly off. Anon a brilliant roller (blue jays, they are wrongfully called) flashes with iridescent plumage among the trees;

very occasionally desert butterflies, mostly of reddish colouring, belated relics of the short African summer, flicker about the grassy veldt. These, with a pearl-grey hawk or two, are the only signs of life to be seen abroad this morning. Sheer desert this land has lain for untold ages, habitable only by game and bushmen. Sheer desert it seems likely to remain to the end of time. Below, only one vast wearisome, waterless flat, masked here and there with bush and low forest; above, the hard pitiless glare of the pale blue sky, with the sun marching steadily across towards the north-west. The desert is very hot now: the spoorers drip sweat; the hunters sit loosely in their saddles, pull forward the brims of their large felt hats, and sometimes cheat the monotony with a pipe of Transvaal tobacco. These long rides—often ten or twelve hours under a burning sun—are nowadays the penalty of South African hunting. The beasts of chase become ever more wary and more difficult to find, and to kill heavy game the hunter must be prepared for long days of toil, and many wearisome hours in the saddle at walking pace.

After three hours a short halt is called, and the nags are off-saddled for half-an-hour. The bushmen have now neared the veldt in which

they know giraffe, *Nghabe* they call them, are feeding, and every precaution has to be taken. There is scarcely a breath of air, and what little there is comes warm in their faces as the hunters remount and silently follow the spoorers. The aspect of the *terrain* has at length changed. In place of grey sand and shrivelled mopani trees, the party are travelling over soil of reddish hue upon which grows a pleasant open forest of the spreading giraffe acacia—the *Kameel-doorn* (camel thorn) of the South African Boers. The leafage of this umbrella-like tree is dark green. Here and there are great open glades of grass, and patches of bush and undergrowth. Typical giraffe country this, in which, for untold aeons of the past, these giant mammals have wandered free and undisturbed.

It is not very long before the bushmen have found fresh spoor. A small troop of giraffes have been feeding here at early morning—you may see their footprints clearly in the soft red sand. The tracks are very curious—reminding one somewhat of a huge and very elongated cow's foot. That imprint under the trees there—you may see where the tall creature has stretched himself almost on tiptoe to secure some lofty, tempting bit of foliage—is ten good inches long, and is the spoor of the bull of the troop.

Things now brighten up wonderfully; all are alert, girths are tightened, the bushmen's eyes are gleaming excitedly, and presently they begin to trot briskly upon the warming trail.

In less than ten minutes one of the mounted hunters spies above some high bush in front the necks of five or six great giraffes, which, in the same instant, have descried their pursuers. The rifles are now snatched from the Masarwa spoorers, and, as the giraffes, in some commotion, swing off, and, with waving necks and strange shuffling gait, glide quietly into the open forest, the hunters press in their spurs, shake up their nags, and gallop after them. If you will look at that strange troop of giant game, not yet aroused to their top speed, stealing away in front with awkward, immense strides and swaying necks, you will note great differences in colouring. The bull there, towering above the rest, is dark chestnut, deepening almost to black upon his back. That great cow, heading the troop, is a brilliant tawny orange; two other cows just behind her, again, are of a paler tint; while the stilty, half grown calf, shuffling alongside, is a sort of washy fawn.

There is some awkward bush to be ridden through before the hunters can get into a real gallop, and the horse of the right-hand English-

man, in crossing a grassy clearing, puts its foot into a jackal's earth, and with its rider comes down an imperial crowner. The hunter is on his feet in an instant, picks up his rifle, mounts again, and sets his pony at his hardest gallop, knocking his weapon against his boot to clear it of red sand, as he thunders along. The rifle quickly cleared, the cartridges are in again, and he can devote his whole attention to the tall game in front.

Nothing is more deceptive than the pace of a running giraffe. You think, as you see the gigantic creatures ambling easily in front of you, that they are not hurrying themselves. Don't be deceived! Those mast-like painted forms, rocking and swaying across the veldt, are going two for your one. Look at the length of their stilt like legs, and again at your South African horse's. The fallen hunter and his nag have for some minutes been doing all they know, and the great game sheering their way, they now press to within seventy yards of their tails. But the giraffes realise their danger and tack off to the left again, and now, their long black tails screwed over their sterns, occasionally switching vigorously (a sure sign that they are in full flight and going their hardest), they leap and rock along at an astonishing speed. The

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long necks, which in their easier paces swung up and down in slow pendulum-like motion, are now going much faster. Giraffes walk and run by moving the two limbs on one side simultaneously—as does the camel—not by the movement of a limb from either side, as with horses and other quadrupeds, and their top speed is attained by a series of ambling bounds, in which the hind legs are spread very widely and awkwardly. Yet their pace is such that unless you drive your horse at his hardest gallop, and run right up to them in the first two miles of chase, they are extremely likely to outstay and get away from you.

But in avoiding one of the hunters, the flying troop has allowed the other Englishman to approach them. By riding hard he has got within a hundred yards of their line, and now as the marvellous procession comes swinging past, he leaps from his pony, takes aim at one of the leading cows, and pulls trigger. The bullet "zwacks"—as a Boer would say—as loudly as if it had struck a barn door; the big cow staggers to the shock, but recovers herself and passes on with the rest. One more barrel the hunter empties at the fast receding troop, but this time the bullet flies wide. Turning for his pony, the gunner with intense vexation sees it trotting

away into the bush; there is some little delay before he catches it again; his chance is gone for the present, and his friend meanwhile takes up the running. Urging his nag with knee and spur and voice to its utmost, he is at last within fifty yards of the flying giants. Leaping off, he gets in two good shots at the biggest cow in the troop, then mounts again and gallops off. The bull giraffe, from his strong aroma and ill-tasting flesh, is usually avoided by men who want meat for their camp. The cow is hard hit, but not vitally, and although tailing off a little, she pegs away lustily. Once more the mounted man has galloped within hail and got his shot. Still, the tall giantess has not fallen. But she is failing now, her race is run; the hunter forces his horse past her, dismounts, and as she staggers by, one final bullet behind the head brings her crashing to the ground.

The chase has led from the forest land into a big open grass plain, upon which here and there a solitary camel-thorn tree rears itself. Shading his eyes with his hand, the victorious hunter, now streaming with perspiration, looks in front, and watches the remainder of the troop vanishing in the distance. Last of them all, lagging a little, runs the other wounded cow,

upon whose blood-spoor to-morrow the eager Masarwas will follow.

Then, dismounting by the prone giraffe, the Englishman proceeds to examine his prize, surely one of the rarest that man may wish for. Fifty years hence, will there be any giraffe to hunt in all Africa? Not many, I trow. The world wears old, and game is going fast, and giraffes, like many other noble beasts, are doomed. With some compunction the hunter's eye runs over the vast dimensions of that sixteen feet of giraffe flesh lying there in the yellow grass. Few things in animal life are more beautiful, yet more strange. As he presses his fingers against the immensely thick dappled hide, the dead quadruped seems to be enveloped in a mantle of bronze—so hard and unyielding is its skin. The short, sloping body, the swan-like neck, the stilt-like, disproportionate legs, the gentle, somewhat deer-like head, dark melting eyes, now dulling in death, and the curiously large, prehensile upper lip, thick of skin, yet soft and velvety; all these things unite to make the giraffe, alive or dead, more and more wonderful each time it is examined afresh.

But now the native after-rider has cantered up, and, soon after him, the second Englishman. The Bamangwato man, drawing his knife, pierces

with some difficulty the skin of the cow's back, and pronounces her very fat. The Bushmen are soon up, running hard upon the spoor, and the work of skinning begins. Five hours later the hunters are at their camp again, laden with flesh and hide and marrow bones. The Masarwas stay beside the carcass all night, to feast upon the flesh and complete the work of cutting up.

XIII.

AFTER BUFFALO AND ZEBRA.

It is agreed upon all hands by experienced hunters in Africa that the buffalo (*Bubalus Caffer*) is one of the three most dangerous four-footed foes that man can attack. Most men class this animal with elephants and lions, as game that requires the highest attributes of skill, courage, and caution to bring to bag. As a matter of fact, it may be laid down that more deaths and dangerous accidents happen annually in Africa in hunting the buffalo than in the chase of any other species of heavy game. In regions where large numbers of these splendid beasts still wander, in troops of three hundred, four hundred, and even more, and where they have been little disturbed, the hunter has no great difficulty in shooting as many as he requires. In fairly open country, where scattered covert exists, and where they can be readily approached—for they are by no means keen-sighted creatures—a man may, he begins to think, shoot buffaloes as easily as he can shoot oxen. But, directly a buffalo is wounded and his blood-spoor has to be taken up, and the hunter has to

follow him into the dense coverts to which he retreats, the business is entirely changed. Then you may prepare to look out for yourself, to take up your heaviest and most reliable weapon, and to follow the track of your game with every sense alert, and your rifle handy for an instant and most deadly charge.

You will find, too, that the native spoorer, who trotted in front of you readily enough on the blood spoor of elephant, and even lion, will now greatly prefer to follow in your rear, and leave you to take upon your own person the first and dangerous risk in the dark and shadowy thickets into which you are advancing. He knows—none better—the dark, evil fury, and the lurking, noiseless ways of the beast of which you are in search. The buffalo, so soon as he is wounded, seems, indeed, to think of little else than a bloody revenge. Unlike most other game, which, when wounded, will almost invariably betake themselves in flight as far from the pursuer as possible, he usually retreats some distance into the densest bush, and then either hides up in some dark corner, where the shadows are deep and dense, or, turning upon his line, takes a parallel path back, and so waits for his foe; or he will even follow back upon his own spoor and conceal himself. Sometimes he will stand,

lurking amid the dark thickets; at another time, if badly wounded, he will lie down; in either case prepared and determined to inflict a bloody revenge for the hurts under which he is smarting. Year after year fatal accidents happen in South African buffalo hunting; year after year men, if not killed outright, are terribly mauled; and, until the buffalo is completely exterminated, he will be found as savage and as dangerous as the lion himself, and, withal, far more revengeful.

I cannot better illustrate the character of these determined and plucky animals than by an adventure narrated to me not long since in the hunting veldt by a Boer hunter from the Transvaal. He had been trekking with some other compatriots far to the north west of Lake Ngami. Flesh was badly wanted in camp, and as Tsetse fly was prevalent in the marshy country, north of the Okanango River, on which they were outspanned, and the natives reported large herds of buffaloes, he left his horses behind him, ferried across the river, and spent the next two days in hunting. He had with him his own Hottentot servant, a good and reliable hunter, and a fair shot, and he had as well several natives of the district, who were anxious for meat, and ready to show him the game.

On the first day the Dutchman came across

some fifty buffaloes grazing in fairly open veldt. Getting behind some good and convenient covert, and with the wind in the right direction, he had little difficulty in shooting two fat cows and a young, fresh bull. The cows were pretty easily secured; but the young bull, although shot through the lungs, jumped on his legs from some long grass and bush, when walked up, charged fiercely at the spooring party, and was only killed within a few feet of the hunter. The rest of the day was spent in skinning and cutting up the game. Part of the natives were sent back to the Boer camp, laden with as much meat as they could carry—the Boers requiring not only fresh meat for immediate use, but enough to make a supply of "biltong" (salted sun-dried flesh); the remainder of the flesh was bestowed upon the native villagers who were with the expedition.

Large numbers of buffaloes were still reported a little further ahead, among the lagoons and marshes of this region, and the Dutch hunter, therefore, camped for the night, ate a hearty supper by the roaring fire, and slept soundly till early dawn. Before sun-up the party were again stirring. In less than two hours' time the natives had led the way to a broad marshy lagoon, or "vlei," as the Boers call it, surrounded

by drier ground, upon which grew bush, acacia trees, and a few tall palms. Part of this lagoon was shallow open water, the remainder consists of a dense bed of tall reeds, which led to further swamps and lagoons beyond. The sight that met the Dutchman's eyes, as he and the natives crept cautiously towards the edge of the "vlei," and surveyed the scene from behind a screen of bush, was a wonderful one. In and about the "vlei" stood a troop of not less than two hundred buffaloes, some rolling in the shallow, some drinking, some standing belly-deep in water, dark and motionless. The buffalo birds (a species of starling—*Buphaga Africana*), those watchful allies of these animals and rhinoceroses, were flying hither and thither, many of them pecking and feeding on the ticks and parasites which infest the buffalo. A number of small white herons, too, were about the "vlei," some of which were also to be seen actually perching on the broad backs of the great game. In any case the stalk required caution, and, with these watchful "buffel-vögel" about, extreme care was, as the Boer saw, essential. Concealed behind a thick mass of bush, to which he and the Hottentot had crept, the Dutchman waited patiently till the troop moved and a fair shot offered.

At last several fat cows, for which he had

been waiting, came, together with a tremendous old bull, within thirty yards. Selecting the best cow, the Boer aimed behind the point of the shoulder, and brought her down. She fell instantly to the shot, struggled a little further, and soon lay dead. The Boer had hoped and expected to bring down another cow. His intentions were frustrated, however, by the bull, which charged upon the instant directly towards the rifle smoke. Within ten yards, the Dutchman, who was kneeling, fired again, hitting the grim beast in front of the chest, and turning it. Meanwhile, at the sound of firing, the whole immense herd floundered out of the "vlei," and went off, crashing through an angle of the reed beds, and thence far into the bush. As they fled the Boer shoved in another cartridge, took aim at a retreating cow eighty yards off, and, by a lucky shot, broke her back. She fell bellowing, and was quickly dispatched. Leaving the natives to skin and cut up these carcasses, the Dutchman now took up the pursuit of the wounded bull, which he had marked in its flight through a dense patch of reeds to the right of the lagoon. The beast had turned off alone, and the greatest care had to be taken in following it through such covert. But the Dutchman had hitherto always had great luck with buffalo, and was

determined to finish off his task. As soon as the reeds were reached, the blood spoor was easily to be followed. The heavy bullet had evidently raked the lungs, the bull was bleeding freely, and large patches of crimson marked its path. The reeds were very tall—twelve or fourteen feet—and thick, and the spooring seemed so dangerous an operation that the Hottentot, who was carrying a second gun—a Martini-Henry—fell behind, leaving his master to take the first risk with his heavy 8-bore. At every step—they were wading knee deep in water—the hunters stopped to listen. They had not penetrated fifty yards through the avenue of broken reeds, afforded by the passage of the bull, when in an instant, and without warning, the beast was upon them. The Boer was knocked flat upon his back by the charge; the bull had miscalculated his distance, had no doubt charged for the sound, and had struck his enemy with his nose, which was held high, as is the habit of these brutes when charging. Galloping over the prostrate Boer, the buffalo went straight for the Hottentot a few paces behind. This unfortunate the brute struck with his horn and tossed on one side some yards into the reeds. Then, continuing its career, the bull passed on out of the "vlei," and took shelter

in some thin bush, where it was afterwards found dead. The Boer, all the wind knocked out of him, and severely bruised, picked himself up, retrieved his rifle, which was flung yards away, and then sought the Hottentot. The unfortunate servant lay among the reeds and water—a terrible wound gaping just below his chest, to the left—breathing his last. He lived only a short time, and died a pathetic and unwilling object-lesson in the risks and dangers of following a wounded buffalo into thick covert.

Occasionally hunters have been attacked by a solitary buffalo, which has charged them before a shot has been fired, and without apparent provocation. In such instances it has usually been found either that the animal had been previously wounded by some other hunter, or had been clawed by a lion; in either case its naturally morose temper having been rendered yet more dangerous.

No hunter ought to attempt to tackle a buffalo with a rifle of lighter calibre than a 577 double express. An even safer weapon is a double 8-bore carrying a spherical bullet. With such a rifle the charge of a buffalo, even at close quarters, can usually be pretty effectually stopped or turned.

Once plentiful all over Southern Africa wher-

ever water was to be found, the buffalo has now to be sought far in the interior. There is one singular exception to this statement. Many years ago the Cape Government passed an Act protecting under severe penalties the buffalo—as well as the elephant—in Cape Colony. In the forest and densely bushed regions bordering the coast-line, some strong troops of buffaloes are still to be found between Mossel Bay and the Kowie River. A few years ago, during a great drought, some of these fine beasts were to be seen drinking in the river within a few miles of the town of Uitenhage. These animals can only be shot in Cape Colony by a special permit from the Governor, and on payment of the sum of £10 for each specimen obtained. Beyond Cape Colony the sportsman has to travel nowadays several hundred miles before he can hope to find buffalo. Perhaps the best country existing at the present time is the low and unhealthy region lying in Portuguese territory between the Sabi and Zambesi. Upon the Busi and Pungue Rivers and their tributaries, and about the tributaries of the Zambesi, on its easterly course, large herds of buffalo are still to be found. This country is, however, only accessible during the African winter—April to October—unless the risk of deadly fever be

taken. There are still buffalo to be found, too, about the Chobe River, in the far-off swamps and marshes of the Upper Okavango. In these regions the Tsetse fly is certain to be found in the buffaloes' haunt, and the hunter must perforce do all his work on foot.

As the African buffalo is one of the toughest and most difficult of all game animals to bring to bag, so that handsome creature, Burchell's zebra (*Equus Burchelli*), the zebra of the plains, is by far the most easily destroyed. A single 450 Express or Martini-Henry bullet will at once turn this fleet and handsome animal of the troop, an easy victim (if not already killed outright) to the hunter's next shot. With a broken leg the zebra is instantly helpless; with a broken limb, and a shot through the body to boot, one of the larger African antelopes, such as a hartebeest or brindled gnu, will often run for miles, and finally escape the hunter altogether. As an almost invariable rule Burchell's zebras are hunted on horseback; they are fleet and enduring, and even a first-class South African hunting pony must be in very good form, and upon hard even ground, to carry his rider within hail of them. Most usually these animals are to be met with feeding on open grassy plains, or in open bush, where large glades and clearings are to be found. In a tail

on end chase across flats, with a fair start, they can usually gallop clean away from the mounted man. If it were not for a habit of curiosity, they would, indeed, be "kittle cattle" to come up with on the great plains. But their curiosity is often their undoing. I have many times galloped steadily behind a troop of these zebras, and then halted for a moment. The zebras would then wheel quickly round in line and stand for a minute to have a good look at the pursuer. This was the time to put in a steady shot. Sometimes, even when the hunter is galloping, they will turn round and stand for a moment, apparently out of sheer curiosity.

In semi-bushy country, where their view is more circumscribed, these zebras are without much difficulty shot. Mashonaland is just such a veldt, and in Mashonaland large numbers of those zebras have been shot within the last few years by the pioneers and settlers. I have found that by making a long *détour* and getting between them and the bush to which they run for shelter, these animals when feeding in the open can be driven about and shot pretty much at will. They seem for the time to become flustered, lose their heads, try to make short cuts past the mounted men, and so fall victims. In former days these magnificent beasts ran in immense

numbers in all the open country from the Orange River to the Zambesi. They are still to be found in large troops in the Ngami-land country, in remoter parts of Mashonaland, and in still larger numbers east and north-east of Mashonaland, towards the coast. Beyond the Zambesi they are widely distributed in Africa, becoming exceedingly plentiful again upon the great plains between the East Coast and Uganda. South of the Orange River they seem seldom, if ever, to have ranged. Burchell's zebra is not to be confounded with the more asinine black and white mountain zebra (*E. Zebra*), which is perfectly striped all over. The Burchell's zebra is best known to the British public of all this handsome group, good examples being always on view in the Zoological Society's Gardens. As a general rule this zebra is not perfectly banded down the legs—as is its mountain cousin—but a variety, sometimes called by scientists "Chapman's Zebra", is to be found in the interior, with the white legs pretty generally banded as far down as the fetlocks. The average European sportsman, having shot a few of these beautiful creatures as specimens, will usually stay his hand and spare them, unless meat for his followers is absolutely needed. The Boer and native hunter, on the contrary, shoot them whenever

they get the chance, merely for the price of the skin—a matter of a few shillings up country. And so the species becomes exterminated. It is a thousand pities! Of all sights in the fair veldt—and there are many to charm the eye—I know of few nobler than that of a good troop of Burchell's zebras—creatures which seem to have been created for no other purpose than to adorn the wilderness. Whether feeding quietly amid the herbage; or resting in the heat of mid-day; or fleeting across the plain, their striped coats, as clean and shining as a well-groomed race-horse's, gleaming in the sunlight; brisk, beautifully proportioned, and full of life and spirits; these zebras represent the highest perfection of feral life. True children of the sun-drenched plains, long may they yet flourish to decorate the African veldt!